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**Common struggles
policy-based vs. scholar-led approaches to open access in the humanities**

Moore, Samuel

Awarding institution:
King's College London

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Common struggles: policy-based vs. scholar-led approaches to open access in the humanities

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Common Struggles:
Policy-based vs. scholar-led
approaches to open access in the
humanities

Samuel A. Moore

2019

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Department of Digital Humanities, King's College London.

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They hang the man and flog the woman
Who steals the goose from off the common

Yet let the greater villain loose
That steals the common from the goose

— *Anonymous*, 17th century protest song

Without community there is no liberation, only the most vulnerable and
temporary armistice between an individual and her oppression. But community must
not mean a shedding of our differences, nor the pathetic pretense that these
differences do not exist.

— Audre Lorde (1984)

Abstract

Open access publishing (OA) not only removes price and permission restrictions to academic research, but also represents an opportunity to reassess what publishing means to the humanities. OA is increasingly on the agenda for humanities researchers in the UK, having been mandated in various forms by universities and governmental funders strongly influenced by advocates in the STEM disciplines. Yet publishing practices in the humanities are unique to the field and any move to a new system of scholarly communication has the potential to conflict with the ways in which humanities research is published, many of which are shaped by the expectations of the neoliberal university that uniquely impact on the practices of humanities researchers. Furthermore, OA does not reflect a unified ideology, business model or political outlook, and different methods of publication based on open practices will inherently represent a variety of values, struggles or conceptual enclosures. This thesis assesses the contrasting values and practices of different approaches to OA in the humanities through a series of case-studies on governmental and scholar-led forms of OA, explored through a critical methodology comprising both constructivism and deconstruction.

The thesis argues that the UK governmental policy framework, comprised of policies introduced by the Research Councils (RCUK) and Higher Education Funding Councils (HEFCE), promotes a form of OA that intends to minimise disruption to the publishing industry. The scholar-led ecosystem of presses, in contrast, reflects a diversity of values and struggles that represent a counter-hegemonic alternative to the dominant cultures of OA and publishing more generally. The values of each approach are analysed on a spectrum between the logic of choice versus the logic of care (following the work of Annemarie Mol) to illustrate how the governmental policies promote a culture of OA predominantly focused on tangible outcomes, whereas the scholar-led presses prioritise an ethic of care for the cultures of how humanities research is produced and published.

In prioritising a commitment to care, scholar-led presses display a praxis that resembles the kinds of activities and relationships centred on common resource

management ('commoning'). The thesis concludes with a series of recommendations for how such care-full values could be best realised in an emancipatory commons-based ecosystem of OA publishing for the humanities, which would be cultivated through a range of institutions and political interventions.

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Sections from Chapter 6 were presented at the Radical Open Access 2 event at Coventry University in June 2018 under the title ‘The ‘Care-full’ Commons: Open Access and the Care of Commoning’.

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Preface

In 2009 I began working as an editorial assistant for the fledgling not-for-profit publisher the Public Library of Science (PLOS). PLOS had pioneered a new publishing model for making research freely available to anyone with a stable internet connection, so-called open access publishing (OA). OA represented to me an exciting, ethical alternative to traditional subscription-based publishing, offering a range of possibilities to academic research dissemination, not just in the sciences but the humanities too. But as OA increased in popularity, I saw how it became co-opted by large, commercial publishers looking to profit from the success of this new approach to publishing. Simultaneously, as I began to think about OA from an academic perspective, I became interested in the work of DIY and grassroots humanities publishers at the margins, those who foreground a different set of values and practices to those of commercial publishing houses.

During the course of this thesis I have continued to work part-time in open-access publishing, and my PhD was funded in part by the advocacy organisation Open Knowledge. I am therefore situated in a community dedicated to various forms of open culture and continue to view public access to scholarly knowledge as a broadly good thing, despite the many complications that arise from it. Over the course of my research I have witnessed the open access landscape change dramatically, including through the announcement and implementation of the governmental policies analysed here. My understanding as an *advocate* has developed as a result.

But I have endeavoured, in the words of Donna Haraway, to ‘stay with the trouble’ of the complexity of OA, particularly with respect to my entanglement within it. Today the OA movement reflects a broad spectrum of positions and practices that impact on the humanities in both intended and unintended ways. OA is often said to embody the neoliberal ideals of efficiency, transparency and global competitiveness, while for others it continues to represent the progressive potential of social justice and emancipatory politics. The following thesis represents my attempt to make sense of this landscape looking specifically at the radical possibilities of OA in the humanities, something able to promote a diversity of

publishing practices in the service of critical interventions in publishing and higher education more generally.

Introduction

Publishing is at the heart of everything humanities researchers do. Not only is it the way by which research is communicated to peers, colleagues and the broader public, it is also the single biggest determinant influencing the careers of researchers across all disciplines and career levels. The humanities have unique and deeply embedded publication cultures that are continually performed, reinforced and reified through shared repertoires that remain for the most part unquestioned by the academic community at large. Integral to this culture, up until recently, has been that publications are organised and released by presses who charge libraries and academics for access via subscriptions and associated fees. Academic publishing and the commodity form are thus inseparable.

Yet over the past decade open access (OA) has increased in popularity across the globe, presenting a threat to toll-access publishing and many of the traditional publishing practices that accompany it. At a basic level, OA research removes price restrictions to academic research so that anyone with an internet connection may access it. But this is a simplification, and OA means many things to many different actors and can be achieved in a variety of ways. For example, it is prized for its ability to ‘democratise’ research access for socially just aims, to speed up the efficient progress of science, or to help provide slack for over-stretched library budgets, among other things. These different motivations are themselves reflective of a range of business models and ethico-political positions, rather than a movement with a coherent ideological basis. As OA increases in popularity, engaging both proponents and detractors, it becomes all the more important to understand its intricacies and power structures so as to grasp how it may disrupt the publishing practice of humanities researchers.

Despite this complexity, OA as a practice is now unavoidable for the average humanities academic, in the UK at least, due to the two major UK governmental funding agencies, Research Councils UK (RCUK) and the Higher Education Funding Councils (HEFCE), having mandated it for the research they fund. The publication of Dame Janet Finch’s government-commissioned report ‘Accessibility, sustainability, excellence: how to expand access to research publications’ was a highly significant event for OA, recommending that the UK should: ‘embrace the

transition to open access, and accelerate the process in a measured way which promotes innovation but also what is most valuable in the research communications ecosystem’ (Finch 2012, 7). Prior to this report, OA in the UK had been a fringe concern for humanities researchers, something of a great deal of importance to a small number, but mostly of little interest to the average academic (G. J. Johnson 2018). The governmental policies therefore marked a watershed moment for OA in the humanities by introducing a top-down component to what was to a large extent previously a grassroots, community-led endeavour or a practice chiefly associated with scientific disciplines.

Taking this context as the starting point, in this thesis I explore the evolving OA landscape and its relationship with humanities disciplines, primarily within the UK. Having been mandated as part of the Research Excellence Framework (REF), OA is something that now affects the vast majority of humanities researchers in UK universities. So it is necessary to explore the complexities of the broader OA situation in order to understand the various ways in which it could impact on humanities research dissemination. I explore this landscape with respect to two distinct interventions in OA publishing: the governmental policies of the UK funding agencies and a heterogeneous collective of publishers run entirely by academics in the humanities. The analysis will focus not just on the practicalities of various governmental and scholar-led approaches to OA, but also the values and decisions taken in the name of OA, and the various ways in which different actors both shape and are shaped by their implementation. In assessing these different approaches, I make the case for conceiving OA in the humanities as something able to promote critical, ethical and experimental interventions in the politics of academic knowledge production and dissemination.

Research aims / contribution to scholarship

There is a great deal of research that starts from the premise that OA is a good in itself, something around which humanities researchers should reorient their publishing practices for the benefit of the broader public and/or saving money for cash-strapped research libraries. Peter Suber describes the ‘main benefits’ of OA as helping readers to ‘find, retrieve, read and use the research they need’ and allowing authors to ‘enlarge their audience and amplify their impact’ (Suber 2014). John

Willinsky argues that OA is a self-evident feature of the research process: ‘a commitment to the value and quality of research carries with it a responsibility to extend the circulation of such work as far as possible (Willinsky 2006, xii). Kathleen Fitzpatrick focuses on the ‘ethical desire’ of OA advocates to redress the balance between information ‘haves and have nots’, both within the academy and outside, reflecting a need to remind scholars why academic research is undertaken in the public interest and not separate from it (Fitzpatrick 2011, 160). For Gary Hall, OA poses questions of ‘academic and institutional authority and legitimacy, and the way it promises to transform and redefine our relationship to knowledge’ (Hall 2008, 54). There are many arguments in favour of open access for the humanities in various forms and it is not my primary aim to argue for a transition to a *particular* kind of OA.

By the same token, I am not making a reactionary statement *against* OA for the humanities, again as how others have done. Robin Osborne argues that OA makes ‘no sense’ because the public is neither interested in nor equipped to understand academic research (Osborne 2013), while David Golumbia focuses on the restrictions OA places on researchers’ academic freedom to control and profit from their own labour (Golumbia 2016). Others instead accept the general premise of OA while objecting to particular implications of it or some of the methods for achieving it. Although certain understandings of OA may indeed be inappropriate for some humanistic disciplines, much opposition to OA in the humanities presupposes a firm definition of what ‘open access’ and ‘the humanities’ are in all situations. As the first two chapters of the thesis show, this is founded on a conceptual misunderstanding of OA and the humanities.

Instead, by focusing on values, I hope to complicate the discussion around OA and the humanities and, following Sarah Kember, to move away from ‘false dichotomies’ of open/closed (Kember 2014, no pagination) that assume forms of publishing are always one thing or the other, rather than reflective of specific decisions – or ‘cuts’ – taken in particular terrains. This means that a plurality of open publishing projects can reflect a plurality of positions or values, but also that a single OA project can equally reflect a plurality of positions. The aim of this thesis, then, is not to argue for a transition to a particular system of OA, but to argue that OA in the humanities requires a plurality of approaches in order to facilitate such difference and antagonism.

OA is also continually in a state of flux: it is influenced, mandated, organised, criticised and promoted by a range of actors in a number of disciplines, positions and locations, many of whom attempt to lock down OA in accordance with their hegemonic definition. There is a large degree of antagonism between proponents of different understandings of OA, but also between OA policymakers and those impacted by their policies. OA is not a settled issue by any means, nor could it ever be. My research intends to explore and assess the various values on display within the OA ecosystem, and their relationship with humanities disciplines, in order to make recommendations for the kinds of OA systems that most befit a variety of responsible humanities praxes. This is achieved through an analysis of the material-discursive formations of scholar-led and policy-based OA initiatives, contrasting broad policy mandates with smaller projects governed by individual humanities communities.

But why the focus on policies versus scholar-led initiatives for OA, especially as this framing immediately sets up an apparent binary opposition between ‘top-down’ and ‘bottom-up’ logics? On the one hand, top-down governmental interventions can be used to bring about a particular kind of behaviour by coercing or incentivising those impacted by the policy to comply with it. Alternatively, however, governmental policy can be used to stimulate new kinds of practices and cultures from the bottom up. Although the governmental OA policies I analyse here comprise primarily of mandates attached to funding awards, this does not mean that there is not a bottom-up intention of the policy framework to stimulate a cultural change in publishing practices. The question is, rather, what kind of cultural change might result from the policies.

Similarly, the term ‘scholar-led’ does not entail anything about the economics or politics of the publishers themselves, only that they are organised by working scholars (both within and outside the academy). Scholar-led projects can represent everything from venture-capitalist ‘spin-out’ biotech companies that are popular in research intensive universities (Franklin, Wright, and Lockett 2001), to activist networks aimed at advancing social justice, to completely informal and spontaneous one-off projects. Academic-led publishing projects do not entail any kind of politics or kind of organisation, just that they are organised and managed by scholars themselves.

Nevertheless, although I do not assume in advance that all scholar-led and policy-based OA projects operate according to separate, oppositional logics, the policies and projects I analyse here *are* justified by their organisers in different ways, as my research will show. In attempting to intervene into what is an incredibly complex movement with numerous actors, each approach is representative of the different possibilities and practicalities of OA. Consequently, they are valuable for imagining what OA *can be*. I could have chosen to study a variety of OA-based projects, led by libraries, university presses, for-profit publishers, including other scholar-led and policy-based approaches. Yet the forms analysed here illustrate two unique articulations of OA with the potential for vastly different consequences. This is why they are interesting from the perspective of OA in the humanities specifically.

OA has been mandated by the UK government and will impact on the overwhelming majority of researchers in the UK, in addition to publishers, librarians, university administrators, and many other positions. OA mandates are coercive and indiscriminate in applying to all researchers equally, while the scholar-led publishers I analyse are small, precarious and embedded in the practices of their communities and disciplines. Given this, there are clear *prima facie* differences between the governmental policies and the scholar-led presses: how they are justified, the cultures they promote and the subjectivities they encourage. They differ in terms of politics, ethics, strategies, reach and their potential impact on the broader OA movement. Drawing out these differences will allow me to critique the dominant discourses around OA in the humanities and to speculate on the possibility of new forms of OA publishing based on the commons and care.

The focus on the humanities in the UK context also offers a unique insight into the debate on OA. The UK higher education sector has been reorganised along neoliberal lines over the past two decades (Maisuria and Cole 2017). With the introduction of tuition fees and the subsequent withdrawal of state support, universities are required to participate as businesses in a market for higher education, vying for the tuition fees of student-consumers to fund their operations. Policymaking in the UK, as we shall see, is expected to conform to the neoliberal logic of measurement by the market, promoting market transactions and efficiencies where possible. The UK's centrally-mandated open access policy coupled with its increasingly marketised higher education sector is itself a unique state of affairs that affects the humanities in a number of ways, not least because of the humanities'

reliance on the monograph as a primary method of communication (as opposed to the journal article). Throughout, I explore the extent to which different approaches to OA might act as a counterpoint to neoliberalism in the UK or whether they simply reinforce or conform to market logic.

This thesis therefore makes a unique contribution to the scholarly literature by critiquing the OA landscape for humanities disciplines and arguing in favour of a commons-based approach to OA, as conceived through an ethics of care that promotes difference through a focus on the relational and situated aspects of the publication process. My argument is grounded in the analysis of OA discourse and practice in a way that permits me to imagine a series of speculative futures for OA publishing in the humanities and the various ways to encourage them.

Outline of thesis

In the remains of this introduction I outline some methodological considerations and constraints. Thereafter, the thesis comprises a further seven chapters of analysis, critique and argumentation on OA in the humanities. **Chapter 1** introduces how humanities researchers currently publish their work, explaining the primacy of a kind of long-form argumentation that is continually reinforced by the increasingly marketised publishing industry. Inextricably bound up with these practices is the persistence of tradition and the influence of external forces that shape and govern research assessment within the neoliberal university. This culture imposes a particular kind of rational, linear, paper-centric humanities and a culture of publishing that restricts the possibility of new methods of research dissemination such as OA.

In **Chapter 2** I offer a history of the concept of OA, exploring the numerous practices, discourses and political conceptions that went into the term's creation. This chapter aims to show that there are various motivations for OA, rather than a coherent and static understanding that informs all projects opening under the 'open access' banner. The concept of OA has a bifurcated lineage from open-source software on the one hand, and the desire for public access to research (for both intrinsic and instrumental reasons) on the other. It therefore entails some degree of complexity and contestation. This also means that OA is both recognisable between communities (broadly defined as 'free research') but has a unique meaning within

them – an example of what Star and Griesemer term a ‘boundary object’ (Star and Griesemer 1989).

Using this framework, the third and fourth chapters explore OA in practice through an analysis of policy-based and scholar-led forms of OA. **Chapter 3** analyses the creation and implementation of the HEFCE and RCUK policies for open access, through interview analysis with Ben Johnson of HEFCE and staff at two UK universities, one Russell Group and one in the former 1994 Group of research-intensive universities. This chapter seeks to illustrate both the governmental funders’ discourses and practices around OA and also how this is implemented in the UK universities. **Chapter 4** provides a counterpoint through secondary interview data analysis of a series of scholar-led publishers in the humanities and social sciences, again revealing their motivations, ways of working and the values that underpin their decision-making. **Chapter 5** draws out the differences between these policy-led and scholar-led forms of OA through a comparative analysis of the two, looking not just at how they differ but also how they relate to the broader OA landscape for humanities disciplines.

The final two chapters make recommendations for OA in the humanities with particular reference to the scholarly commons and researcher control of research infrastructures. Drawing on the analysis conducted, **Chapter 6** imagines new forms of organisation for the values elucidated, reconceiving OA in the humanities as a kind of scholar-led commons termed the ‘care-full’ commons. Theorising OA in the humanities as a commons is a political intervention and requires different ways of thinking about publishing, higher education and beyond, and **Chapter 7** concludes the thesis with recommendations for how such a commons could be nurtured at the grassroots, institutional and policy levels, suggesting a direction for future research.

Methodological considerations

It is necessary at this stage to introduce some of the ways I am thinking about the material analysed and the approaches employed in my argument, although this will be clarified further in the ensuing chapters (particularly with regard to the practical aspects of data collection and analysis). Open access publishing has a number of dimensions, from questions of politics and economics to those of responsibility and ethics, alongside more pragmatic issues such as funding and

sustainability. Many of these questions relate to conceptions of the humanities and the university more broadly, but particularly how their incentive structures and traditions encourage certain subjectivities and discourage others. I adopt a theoretical framework that keeps these elements to the fore of the analysis, aiming to attend to both the discourses and practices relating to OA in the humanities in order to understand the justifications for policy-driven and community-led forms of OA and how they operate in practice.

First, it is important to understand that OA is *disruptive* in how it unsettles certain taken-for-granted practices associated with humanities publishing. I do not mean disruptive in the sense of *disruptive innovation* as described by Clayton Christensen, whereby technological change allows new businesses to provide certain services more cheaply than incumbents, thus ‘disrupting’ the market in which it participates (Christensen 1997). While OA does rely on the ability of digital technology to disseminate research more efficiently than the print model, thereby disrupting the incumbent publishing industry’s business practices, this is not why it is interesting for my purposes (although many have discussed OA in these terms, (e.g., Allahar 2017)). Instead, I am interested in understanding the extent to which OA disrupts – or has the potential to disrupt – the values underlying the practices of humanities researchers. Furthermore, in contrast to Christensen’s disruptive innovation, Gary Hall speaks of the ‘affirmative disruption’ that technology might facilitate to bring about new economic models, particularly for publishing and higher education (Hall 2016b, Affirmative Disruption). In having its basis in a range of justifications for making research freely available, does OA gesture towards new ways of thinking about humanities publishing or does it merely rehearse the same economics and value systems that underpin traditional subscription publishing practices?

I adopt a similarly disruptive stance towards the humanities themselves. Although I deny the possibility of a firm definition of ‘the humanities’, I will keep to the fore the potential for OA to contribute to the expanding horizon of what humanities research can be. The humanities entail certain reified institutional and disciplinary assumptions about ‘human’ culture through disciplines such as literary studies, historical studies and cultural studies, even when the ‘human’ itself has been under question by critical theorists and ‘anti-humanists’ for decades (Braidotti 2013, 143). My understanding looks beyond traditional anthropocentric understanding of

the humanities and towards a humanities of difference, what David Theo Goldberg terms the ‘afterlife’ of the humanities, disposed to ‘openness to the world, to worlds about it, rather than self-enclosed, introspective, walled off’ (Goldberg 2014, no pagination). There is a tension between liberal-humanist understandings of the human that define much of what it means to write and publish in the humanities today, and the possibilities of a more experimental humanities, what Rosi Braidotti terms the ‘posthuman humanities’ (Braidotti 2013, 143), that looks towards difference, new subjectivities, blurred disciplinary formations and a de-centring of the human as a rational, enlightenment subject. How, then, might OA respond to, or even encourage, a humanities of difference and not simply rehearse our institutionally-enforced understandings of it?

A justification for my focus on the humanities is also required. As we shall see in Chapter 1, humanities publishing practices entail a certain repertoire of publishing behaviours that are marked by a reliance on the monograph as the chief requirement for career advancement. The humanities are not the only disciplines to utilise the monograph as a primary method of communication—many social science disciplines do so also—and my decision to focus on humanities research represents a cut rather than any particular intention to firmly separate disciplines into those covering ‘human’ languages, literature and culture and those not doing so (or between quantitative and qualitative/theoretical research, especially given the rise of the digital humanities and data-driven humanities scholarship in recent years). In fact, the humanities of difference and possibility that I advocate would collapse such distinctions and reveal their arbitrary nature. Given this, some of the monograph publishers analysed in Chapters 4 & 5 would be better described as ‘social science’ presses, such as Mattering and Language Science Press, even though they encounter many of the same issues as the self-described humanities presses. ‘The humanities’ is therefore useful as a recognisable term with certain connotations, even though my understanding of them is less rigid than the term implies.

Neoliberalism

Many of the issues explored in this thesis relate to OA’s relationship with neoliberalism, the dominant mode of governance in contemporary society. Neoliberalism itself requires a definition despite, as Wendy Brown shows, it ‘has

never been one cogent, coherent doctrine’ (Brown and Littler 2018, 15). Neoliberal forms of governance are those that are justified in accordance with market logic, promoting market-based outcomes where possible. Brown writes: ‘All conduct is economic conduct; all spheres of existence are framed and measured by economic terms and metrics, even when those spheres are not directly monetized’ (Brown 2015, 10). As the dominant organisational philosophy since the 1980s, in the Global North at least, neoliberalism promotes a kind of subjectivity based on competition, individualism and rational calculation. This is a subjectivity represented, as Foucault describes, by the rational self-interested figure of *homo oeconomicus*, the entrepreneur of the self: ‘being for himself his own capital, his own producer, the source of his earnings’ (Foucault 2008, 226). Under neoliberalism, *homo oeconomicus* takes on a more active, individualistic role as both producer and consumer of its own ‘satisfaction’, compared with classical liberalism whereby *homo oeconomicus* is a mere partner of exchange (Foucault 2008, 225–26). This change of emphasis results in a governing rationality that promotes individual market participation and measurement above all else.

I will explore the impact of neoliberalism on humanities publishing in the first chapter, particularly in the context of the privatisation of higher education and the marketization of scholarly publishing, and this critique will remain a dominant frame throughout. I am interested in (and critical of) neoliberalism inasmuch as it promotes a particular kind of individualised, commercially-driven practice at the expense of collective forms of action and resistance. Under neoliberalism, Brown writes: ‘subjects, liberated for the pursuit of their own enhancement of human capital, emancipated from all concerns with and regulation by the social, the political, the common, or the collective, are inserted into the norms and imperatives of market conduct [...]’ (Brown 2015, 108). Although this may be achieved under the guise of freedom, neoliberalism entails an understanding of the world that enforces individualism and works against the collective or the common good. To this extent, my thesis approaches the values of neoliberalism as something that OA may either conform to and disrupt in varying ways, as either representative of these values or something more transformative or emancipatory (although this is not to say that OA projects can be described in advance as being either neoliberal or not in *all* situations, as I argue below). The term values itself carries with it some epistemological and ontological weight that is necessary to explain.

The contingency of values

Although neoliberalism encourages a certain kind of subjectivity, I want to emphasise that I do not consider such a subjectivity to be in any way fixed. Following Chantal Mouffe, I adopt an anti-essentialist ontological stance that does not presuppose identity as something necessary or immutable. Describing a state of affairs as neoliberal represents a contingent and pragmatic articulation rather than a permanently applicable or categorical statement. An anti-essentialist standpoint, Chantal Mouffe writes, ‘does not imply the rejection of any idea of rationality, individuality or universality, but affirms that they are necessarily plural, discursively constructed and entangled with power relations’ (Mouffe 1997, 7). When attempting to understand the values of publishing, the humanities and OA, then, one needs to keep in mind their contingency, plurality and the fact that they are constructed and influenced by certain power relations.

For example, in Chapter 1 I aim to illustrate how the publishing practices of humanities researchers have evolved out of commitments shaped by numerous power structures within politico-institutional arrangements. There is nothing intrinsic to humanities research that requires linear, rational argumentation presented in single-authored, paper-bound form. These reified practices are deeply held by humanities researchers, even though our ideas of humanities publishing (and the humanities too) are entirely contingent. This is why ‘the humanities’ is only useful as a purposefully vague term that refers to a set of institutional assumptions and practices rather than a coherent thing-in-itself. In this regard, my thesis proceeds under the assumption that there is no ‘essence’ to discover that underpins the research conducted. Instead, my analysis of OA discourse and practice depicts how certain contingent realities are created and shaped according to a variety of power relations and negotiations.

For this reason, I am not concerned with understanding and critiquing the values associated with different forms of OA in order to make an argument for why they do not conform to the *correct* set of values. My approach is more complicated and eschews the possibility that such a desirable set of values can be determined in advance. Instead, value judgements operate according to what Mouffe and Laclau term the ‘structural undecidability’ of the social, a terrain of infinite contingency that

prefigures no final, decidable state of affairs (Laclau and Mouffe 2001, xii). While this does not preclude the possibility of making strong arguments in scholarly research, a deconstructive method shows us how value judgements are necessarily impermanent and entirely open in character. This is a political deployment of Jacques Derrida's claim that every decision is 'structured by this experience and experiment of the undecidable' (Derrida 1988, 116). Ethico-political decisions are taken in a world of absolute openness to the other, of 'chaos and instability' (Derrida 1996, 84), such that the taking of a decision is an unnatural attempt at imposing order on a necessarily un-orderable situation. As Derrida writes: 'There can be no moral or political responsibility without this trial and this passage by way of the undecidable. Even if a decision seems to take only a second and not to be preceded by any deliberation, it is structured by this experience and experiment of the undecidable' (Derrida 1988, 116).

For Derrida, deconstruction seeks to expose this kind of undecidability: 'All that a deconstructive point of view tries to show is that since convention, institution and consensus are forms of stabilisations (sometimes stabilisations of great duration, sometimes micro-stabilisations), this means that they are stabilisations of something essentially unstable and chaotic' (Derrida 1996, 83). Or, as Laclau argues, 'deconstruction consists in discovering the undecidability of things which are presented as being either joined or separated' (Laclau 2002, no pagination). Part of the point of deconstruction, then, is to reveal how specific ethical and political (values-based) decisions are taken in a world ontologically haunted by undecidability, rather than decided with reference to certain positivist, moral or historical 'truths' that necessarily cannot apply to all things at all times. In this respect, a deconstructive approach, as I adopt here, will assume that values are relational rather than transcendental, and contingent rather than necessary.

The approach I employ in this thesis seeks to unpick the decisions made in the various justifications for OA and to understand and critique their politics and the values to which they appeal. In doing this, I hope to trouble and move beyond the idea that OA reflects a 'relatively stable moral episteme', as Bacevic and Muellerleile claim, that 'positions agents in relation to knowledge as a good' (2017, 2). Even if the discourse around OA in general bears the hallmarks of stability in this sense, I want to explore that this may not always be the case and that there are numerous justifications for OA from a range of ethical positions, particularly on the

fringes of OA in the humanities, that do not conform to such an understanding. In doing so, I hope to offer a more complicated picture of the decisions taken in the service of OA in the humanities.

Description, normativity and ‘the cut’

Importantly, the undecidability of values does not imply absolute relativity or ‘freeplay’ of ethico-political decision-making (Derrida 1988, 115). Instead, paradoxically, undecidability actually reveals the necessity of responsible decision-making. As Derrida writes:

I will even venture to say that ethics, politics, and responsibility, *if there are any*, will only ever have begun with the experience and experiment of the aporia. When the path is clear and given, when a certain knowledge opens up the way in advance, the decision is already made, it might as well be said that there is none to make; irresponsibly, and in good conscience, one simply applies or implements a program. Perhaps, and this would be the object, one never escapes the program. In that case, one must acknowledge this and stop talking with authority about moral or political responsibility. The condition of possibility of this thing called responsibility is a certain *experience and experiment of the possibility of the impossible: the testing of the aporia* from which one may invent the only *possible invention, the impossible invention*. (Derrida 1992c, 41).

Aporia here refers to a ‘contradiction’ or an impasse with respect to decision-making that can only be overcome through the taking of a decision. One must make *a* decision (as opposed to no decision at all, which itself is a decision) because it is the responsible thing to do. In fact for Derrida, drawing on Emmanuel Levinas, responsibility actually ‘precedes’ human freedom in how humans are ontologically structured to take one another into account (Derrida 1999, 3). As a result, the world is *always already* structured according to ethical normativity, making it an inescapable feature of human subjectivity, even though each individual obligation is itself undecidable.

Given that ethics is a continually present facet of human ontology, but that ethical values are not something that can be predetermined according to any particular moral code, my methodology eschews the traditional distinction between description and normativity, or the difference between how things *are* and how they *should be*. Analysing and describing the various approaches to OA in the humanities will necessarily carry with it a normative dimension, or what Joanna Zylińska terms ‘foundation-less normativity’ (Zylińska 2005, 3). This normativity does not presuppose anything beyond the fact that engagement with the ethics of certain OA-based practices is itself an ethical act; the description of a practice simultaneously establishes an argument for *how things should be*. For Zylińska, analysing culture through a lens of the ‘performative’ is one way of moving beyond binary and oppositional ways of structuring the world. Understanding that identity (such as gender, for example) is performed rather than representative of a particular essence is one way of moving beyond description and normativity, i.e., the idea of how the world should be is already implicated in the performances that make-up how the world *is*.

Performativity, for Zylińska, is an ‘empowering concept in politics because it not only explains how change happens but also shows that change is possible even when we are functioning within the most congealed, oppressive and totalitarian social and cultural structures’ (Zylińska 2005, 5). Academic identity, for example, may not be the most oppressive or totalitarian structure (in the UK at least), but it certainly contains a number of reified practices and a ‘shared repertoire’ (Etienne Wenger 1998) that academics in the humanities must perform if they are to progress in their careers, as I discuss in the first chapter. Understanding that academic identity is performative according to a range of expectations and ‘ethical investments’ (Laclau 2002, no pagination), and how this leads to an array of reified disciplinary publishing practices, will reveal the possibility of encouraging and nurturing new subjectivities under different conditions. Normativity and description are therefore inseparable according to performativity; to understand the various values at play is to situate them against a version of reality that is by necessity always demanding of ethical responsibility for decisions taken.

But closely related to the notion of responsibility is how an ethical and responsible decision actually gets taken. By assuming that one needs to take a

decision, how does one actually learn to decide without a predetermined ethical playbook? Kember and Zylinska argue:

‘What we mean by a “true ethical decision” here differs from the position on agency in traditional moral philosophy, whereby an ethical decision is made by a transparent, self-contained, liberal subject who is capable of evaluating the available options and making a rational choice from among them. For us, a decision is always to some extent arational, made by the (inhuman) other in me, and necessitating a leap of faith beyond the scope of available options’ (Kember and Zylinska 2012, 82).

A decision is ‘arational’ but also an ethical imperative, thus requiring a leap of faith. Kember and Zylinska employ the feminist materialism of Karen Barad to illustrate that ethical decision-making has an ontological dimension as a form of agential ‘cut’ in reality. Agency is not something with which subjects are endowed; rather, agency emerges out of an ‘intra-action’ between humans and non-humans (Barad 2007, 140). A decision is therefore a cut, a way of separating, enclosing and excluding, which in turn creates new forms of subjectivity. This means that, for Barad, ‘[e]thics is about mattering, about taking account of the entangled materializations of which we are a part, including new configurations, new subjectivities, new possibilities—even the smallest cuts matter’ (Barad 2007, 384). Kember and Zylinska describe ethical decision-making as a process of learning to *cut well* and mediate between and within the material world: ‘mediation becomes a key trope for understanding and articulating our being in, and becoming with, the technological world, our emergence and ways of intra-acting with it, as well as the acts and processes of temporarily stabilizing the world into media, agents, relations, and networks’ (Kember and Zylinska 2012, xv).

The notion of mediation is crucial for my methodology and helps elide traditional methodological differences between analyses of language and materiality, rather than maintaining a strict distinction between the two. How does mediation impact on various understandings of OA and what are the ethical implications of this? For example, Bruno Latour centres much of his constructivist actor-network theory on the idea of humans and non-humans as mediators within networks, rather than passive intermediaries. Mediators, for Latour, ‘transform, translate, distort, and

modify the meaning or the elements they are supposed to carry' (Latour 2005, 39). They impact on the meaning of a network simply by mediating between two actors and imparting meaning on the elements therein. Mediation is helpful for studying socio-technical systems, in Latour's case, but it is also useful for understanding policy-making, particularly how a grassroots movement (in this case, open access) is translated by various actors when it is turned into a policy object and subsequently implemented in various local sites.

But unlike Latour, I am interested in mediation from a deconstructive perspective too. Comparing constructivism (or compositionism, as terms it) and deconstruction, Latour writes:

Both insist on the inevitable tropism of mediations, on the power of all those intermediaries that make impossible any direct access to objectivity, truth, morality, divinities, or beauty. Resemblance stops there, however.

Deconstruction goes downhill to avoid the peril of presence, compositionism goes uphill to try to catch as much presence as possible. One behaves as if the main danger was for words to carry too much meaning, the other fights to wring out as much reality as possible from the fragile mediators it has painfully assembled. (Latour 2002, 16).

Latour's main concern with deconstruction is that it assumes too much and proceeds too carelessly, lacking 'care and caution' whereas constructivism proceeds slowly and assumes little in its analysis (ibid). Yet this is unhelpfully superficial as a critique of deconstruction. Deconstruction, as Derrida argues, consists in 'reversing and displacing a conceptual order as well as the nonconceptual order with which it is articulated' (Derrida 1988, 21). It requires one to read a text with the intention of revealing not its 'true' meaning but how, as Gary Hall argues, texts can put forward 'irreconcilable positions' that may differ from the positions they 'portray themselves as adopting' (Hall 2002, 3). Deconstruction, for Hall, is 'the enactment of a certain problematizing reading, a reading which, rather than just imposing pre-established ideas and concepts, is open to the *difference* and alterity of the text' (Hall 2002, 3). There is thus nothing necessarily careless or presumptive about approaching a text in this way; it is the 'openness' to the alterity of a text that makes deconstruction a useful tool for understanding the relationship between, for example, textuality and

culture, politics and power. All of this requires care and attention in maintaining openness to the difference within a text.

It is useful to approach OA discourse using deconstruction not as an overarching method or theory, but as a way to think through some of the false dualisms and discursive constructions associated with OA. The OA movement did not originate from nowhere but is instead reflective of positions and statements with the intent to stabilise the meaning of a number of terms such as ‘publishing’ ‘the humanities’ and ‘the university’, but particularly ‘open access’ itself. Through deconstruction we can reveal that these attempts at stabilisation – referring not just to discursive formations, but to the material objects these formations may represent – are always without authoritative foundation. Although their meanings may be continually rehearsed by those invested in them, discursive formations are ultimately constructions that could have been otherwise. Deconstruction helps reveal this by its continual presence throughout my research, reminding us of the ‘undecidable’ nature of things, in a similar way to how Joanna Zylińska describes Derrida as a ‘ghostly figure’ throughout her work, ‘appearing as if out of the blue’ (Zylińska 2005, 8).

But while it may be troubling for some that deconstruction reveals a lack of authoritative foundation to what is taken for granted, the upshot of a deconstructive method is wholly positive. It leaves space for performative and responsible interventions into the ‘chaos’ that organises the social. As Derrida writes: ‘Chaos is at once a risk and a chance, and it is here that the possible and the impossible cross each other’ (Derrida 1996, 84). Deconstruction maintains that social reality, ethics and politics are always temporary constructions, and this opens up the space for responsible ethico-political constructions, experiments and interventions. A deconstructive approach can therefore reveal the structuring oppositions that order the discussion around OA while creating the conditions for rethinking, restructuring and breaking from them too.

So, in order to understand different forms of mediation – be they represented textually or actor-based – I employ both the deconstructive thought of Jacques Derrida, as also employed by Chantal Mouffe and Ernesto Laclau, alongside the material-semiotic and feminist analyses of Annemarie Mol and Leigh Star (among others). Approaching the analysis in this way provides a rich account of both the practices and discourses that relate to open access publishing. Both constructivism

and deconstruction are interested in understanding how the world is mediated. Chantal Mouffe helpfully highlights the difference between the two approaches:

The best way to apprehend their nature is probably by pointing out that, instead of saying, like Latour, that the common world has to be ‘composed’, Laclau and I assert that it has to be ‘articulated’. This terminological difference is meant to highlight the fact that the process of composition always takes place in a terrain informed by power relations – or to put it in our vocabulary, that the common world is always the result of an ‘hegemonic’ construction. As a consequence, it is not enough for us to ask if this world is badly or well constructed. It is also necessary to examine the power relations that are at play in composition (Mouffe 2013, 81).

The deconstructive or ‘discursive hegemonic’ approach of Mouffe and Laclau understands the world as it is articulated based on mediations via power relations. Constructivism, on the other hand, is not chiefly concerned with power although it is important. The two can be complementary in part and I will be employing them as so, for example in Chapter 2 by utilising the work of Isto Huvila’s analysis of boundary objects as ‘hegemonic interventions’ (Huvila 2011). This represents an analysis of the non-consensual (power-based) practices of different communities of practice when collaborating on a shared enterprise. Such analysis requires establishing who the mediators are in a given network and analysing the power dynamics at play, introducing a critical stance to social construction.

Entanglement

However, in some ways constructivism and deconstruction are also antagonistic and not entirely commensurate with one another. I have already claimed above that I do not view deconstruction as an overarching framework or method, and this is the case for my theoretical approach more generally that instead reflects a variety of traditions and theoretical approaches. To this extent, I follow Donna Haraway in my commitment to ‘staying with the trouble’ with my research: ‘passing on in twists and skeins that require passion and action, holding still and moving, anchoring and launching’ (Haraway 2010). This requires a recognition that research is not a linear, detached or objective process; I am wholly entangled with the

research presented here. For Haraway it also ‘matters what stories we tell to tell other stories with; it matters what knots knot knots, what thoughts think thoughts, what descriptions describe descriptions, what ties tie ties’ (Haraway 2016, 12). The politics of academic citation are of vital importance and I therefore cite theorists here not because their works are canonical in a particular academic tradition, but because they allow me to stay with the trouble of OA through a series of ‘ontologically heterogeneous partners’ (ibid). This practice represents my entanglement with the research and my ‘becoming-with’ it also, even if the ‘stories’ I use to tell other stories with are not entirely consistent with each other.

I am also entangled with the subjects interviewed in Chapter 3 and I have tried to proceed with care for their words and actions, alongside those of the interviewees presented in Chapter 4. From an interview perspective, this means the data collected represents more of a dialogue, especially the interview with Ben Johnson of HEFCE, than ‘objective’ qualitative research (as Chapter 3 describes in more detail). It is important, then, to consider my own position as a humanities researcher, an advocate of open practices, and my career to date working within open access publishing, and how this shapes my research. I am simultaneously intertwined within the subject matter that I am analysing in a way that precludes detachment; I am studying the mediators within a network in which I also mediate and impact on, in however minimal a way. This means my thesis is in a way performative, containing elements of fiction, and I can never remove myself from the structures I analyse. The notion of performativity allows me to move beyond the opposition between researcher and analysis, subject and object, and instead illustrates that research is entangled and requires responsibility and care for the worlds I choose to build.

Related to this entanglement is the increasing popularity of terms such as *action research* (in education studies) and *situated intervention* (in sociology of healthcare) to denote the performative aspects of research that attempt to have direct impact in the ‘real world’. It is helpful to see my thesis at least partially in this light, not necessarily in solutionist terms – as a way of fixing any particular problem – but as a way of intervening in publishing and the trajectory of open access publishing specifically. Situated intervention moves beyond mere ethical engagement and towards acting upon that normativity: not just saying how the world should be but *performing* it also. Teun Zuiderent-Jerak describes situated intervention as a way of

eliding the difference between ‘intervening in practices and furthering our scholarly understanding of them’ (Zuiderent-Jerak 2015, 3). While interventions are more common in healthcare, I feel situated enough *within* a publishing community such that I can intervene in however minimal a way.

In this vein, towards the end of the thesis I became involved with the Radical Open Access Collective, a loosely affiliated group of presses promoting various forms of OA positioned in opposition to dominant hegemonic practices (Adema and Moore 2018). Learning more about these presses through interview analysis, and in turn helping the collective set up a web presence, discussion list and resource database, became a form of situated intervention in the open access movement. As a result, I am inclined to view self-reflexivity and intervention in the way Zuiderent-Jerak does as a form of ‘artful contamination’, drawing on Mouffe’s idea of ‘mutual contamination’ and Suchman and Trigg’s work on ‘artful integration’. Artful contamination describes the way in which research both changes the domain of study *and* the identity and concerns of the researcher (Zuiderent-Jerak 2015, 187). It prevents the researcher from getting stuck in ‘pre-given problem spaces’ that enforce particular ways of thinking, such as false binaries and strict disciplinary ways of thinking, thus preventing fields of research from becoming ‘sedentary’ (ibid). From working with the Radical Open Access Collective my thinking on OA changed dramatically, particularly towards publishing as a form of *care*, which became something of a dominant frame for the thesis. The interviews with some of the presses in this collective are analysed in Chapter 4 of the thesis and my relationship with them (and the ‘artful contamination’ I experienced) is described in the concluding chapter.

In terms of open access, then, I aim to proceed ‘carefully’ ‘and will strive to appreciate the power relations and forms of mediation that exist between the human and non-human actors that influence OA in the humanities. I will do this by both assembling actors and interpreting discursive statements that pertain to the sites analysed, using a variety of stories to do so. This will entail both articulating and composing certain realities that underpin an ontology that is anti-essentialist but necessitates ethical normativity and responsibility.

Power and hegemony

It is also worth explaining hegemony, a term I will be utilising which relates to the study of power. Hegemony is a term from classical Marxism, usually associated with the work of Antonio Gramsci, to illustrate an exercise of power through a mixture of coercion and consent such that, as Gramsci claimed, ‘force does not overwhelm consent but appears to be backed by the consent of the majority’ (Gramsci and Buttigieg 1992, 156). Hegemony concerns ideological domination of one group, often backed tacitly by other groups, that entails ‘a set of descriptions of the world, and the values that preside over it, that become in large measure internalised by those under its sway’ (Anderson 2017, 21). In order to challenge the dominant hegemony and enact social change, one must establish a counter-hegemonic challenge to the ruling bloc by using similar means.

For Mouffe, a successful hegemony ‘signifies a period of relative stabilization and the creation of a widely shared ‘common sense’ (Mouffe 1997, 53). But this does not indicate rational agreement or absolute stability, even though, as Simon Critchley shows, it is an *attempt* at stabilisation and to ‘fix the meaning of social relations’ (Critchley 2002). As we have seen above, the political is always undecidable, never fixed, and subject to permanent conflict of antagonistic forces. For my purposes, a hegemonic understanding of scholarly communications is needed to appreciate the struggles and antagonisms within the move to open access and place them against the backdrop of predominantly neoliberalised institutions of higher education. Subscription publishing is the current common sense of humanities publishing, certainly until recently, and certain articulations of OA pose a counter-hegemonic threat. Understanding that change in scholarly communication always reflect a series of struggles will allow me to argue for a ‘vibrant clash of political opinions and an open conflict of interests’ – what Mouffe terms an ‘agonistic pluralism’ (Mouffe 1997, 6).

By analysing the tactics used in employing a concept, I hope to reveal the power relations that shape and govern a particular discourse. I am employing this method not to provide a conclusive or exhaustive account of the histories of open access or the commons, for example, but to illustrate how some of the different discourses that relate to these concepts have resulted in the landscape that exists now. How, for example, have these lineages been shaped by various hegemonic

articulations and interventions that in turn influence those in power (at least, from the perspective of policy-based open access)? How does a concept become explicitly politicised according to a dominant hegemonic definition and what are the implications of this for other, less dominant groups (and how, if at all, are multiple coexistent definitions of a term – what Laclau terms ‘floating signifiers’ – possible? (Laclau 2005, 123))? Understanding these issues is also beneficial from a perspective of ethical change: if one understanding of the historically-constructed concepts of open access, the commons, the humanities, etc. becomes dominant, how is it possible to counteract this through counter-hegemonic interventions?

My foregrounding of discursive analysis, primarily through deconstruction, also needs to be understood in the context of contemporary schools of thought in the humanities that emphasise objects and the material world as their units of analysis, such as media archaeology, object-oriented ontology and other strands of new materialism. Denying the binary opposition between the study of language and materiality that is implied by the focus on ‘objects’, I understand instead that one is always implicated in the other. Not only is writing clearly concerned with the material world, of texts, paper and ink, it is true also that new materialist analysis is equally concerned with language and apprehending the world using language. Derrida himself claims that ‘there is no deconstruction which does not [...] begin by calling again into question the dissociation between thought and technology[.]’ (Derrida and De Man 1989, 108). Language and materiality, from the perspective of deconstruction, are thus intertwined in a way prohibits such a strict distinction. Indeed, in many respects, a deconstructive approach to the distinction between a ‘material turn’ and the ‘linguistic turn’ reveals less of a methodological separation between the two and more of a rhetorical strategy relating to academic fashions and disciplinary silos, as emphasised by the university as a competitive institution.

Use of source material

This thesis analyses a range of sources, including interview data, blogposts from advocates and practitioners, secondary literature and responses to policy consultations, in order to build an argument about how OA is being practiced, implemented and mandated. As mentioned above, the reliance on interview data is not intended to represent objective qualitative research into the ‘reality’ of OA and

the humanities. Instead, the range of source material analysed here provides an empirical richness to the argument that contributes to an ongoing conversation within the competing discourses on open access. Citing blogposts and opinion pieces is one way of engaging with these discourses, playing them against one another and revealing their internal inconsistencies through deconstructive analysis. This approach helps build an argument that is both grounded in the realities of OA implementation, through analysis of a range of projects and perspectives, but also permits speculation into alternatives with particular reference to the secondary literature on the commons.

Methods of data collection and analysis (alongside any issues with consent and research ethics) are outlined in the relevant chapters (3 and 4). These include interviews conducted with Ben Johnson of HEFCE and with university staff at two UK universities. Chapter 4 is based on secondary data analysis of interviews conducted as part of a the JISC project on ‘The Rise of New University Presses and Academic-Led Presses in the UK’ (Adema, Stone, and Keene 2017). Data reuse and data sharing (‘open data’) is a foundational tenet of open science, though is perhaps less practiced in social science and humanities disciplines. This thesis analyses openly available data as open science-in-practice, illustrating the fact that data should not be kept hidden by its collectors, but instead benefits from wider sharing and use in a range of different contexts. Such an approach requires the recognition that other researchers are collaborators rather than competitors, something of a theme throughout this thesis, and requires one to view scholarship as a gift to the commons rather than as private property for individual use. In recognition of this, I will be releasing my interview with Ben Johnson into the public domain so that others may benefit from analysing it. The interviews with university staff, however, cannot be released into the public domain because of how the data was collected.

Many researchers opt to work in an entirely ‘open’ way, based on what the chemist Jean-Claude Bradley termed ‘open notebook science’, in which data and analysis are released in real time and made publicly available via an online lab notebook (Bradley 2010). Clinio and Albagli describes open notebook science as an ‘emerging epistemic culture’ that is based not on ‘matters of fact’ but on ‘matters of proof’ and meticulously showing one’s workings (Clinio and Albagli 2017). From a humanities perspective, Gary Hall explores the concept through a blogpost highlighting that the open humanities notebook ‘provides an opportunity to

experiment critically with loosening at least some of the ties used to bind books once a text has been contracted by a professional press' (Hall 2011, no pagination). Open notebooking in the humanities can therefore facilitate experimentation with the expected conventions of scholarly publishing by revealing how a project comes together, the decisions made and the analyses left out of the final work.

Yet, while I have presented and published small portions of this thesis, I have elected to make it open access only at the point of completion (inasmuch as a thesis can ever be considered 'complete'), rather than iteratively and as a work-in-progress. A PhD is a form of credentialing that requires careful discussion between the supervisor and supervisee, but also care for one's interview subjects, especially the anonymous interviewees who participated. Releasing analysis of interview data that may change before the thesis is complete has the potential to be *care-less* more than anything. This is not to say that a complete thesis represents the final say on the matter, but that it has been sufficiently scrutinised such that I would feel comfortable I have done the topic justice. Furthermore, regulations at King's College are also surprisingly strict about what constitutes original research (and whether seeking feedback from those external to one's supervisors is considered co-authorship) and so I decided it would not be possible to iteratively release my research online and seek feedback in that way. To have released the thesis online iteratively without seeking feedback would feel to me nothing more than mere self-promotion rather than responsible scholarly praxis.

Chapter 1. Publishing cultures in the humanities

Introduction

Publishing is integral to the communication of humanities research and to the careers of humanities researchers, shaping many of the practices undertaken within the contemporary university. Despite its importance, humanities publishing is something of a black box that represents a number of different processes and practices which continue either unquestioned or unexamined by the average humanities researcher. It is helpful to think of open access publishing (OA) as a ‘controversy’, in Latour’s sense of the word, something that is ‘unstable and shifting’ and thus reveals the patterns of behaviour within a particular network (Latour 2005, 24). As a controversy, OA forces open this black box, shedding light on some of the processes that shape how humanities publishing operates. Controversies jar with particular aspects of the status quo and highlight the points at which ordinary behaviours break down, which is precisely the reason they are controversial.

OA is motivated by a number of states of affairs within the humanities, such as the profits of large commercial publishing houses and the commodification of research outputs, the inequities of research access both within and outside of the western academy, and the lack of researcher ownership or governance of the infrastructures that shape scholarly communications. In varying degrees these concerns also relate to scientific publishing, or academic publishing more generally, and OA is often seen as primarily a scientific response to a scientific problem. Yet for my purposes it is important to frame open access as responding to the specific conditions in humanities publishing, even though many of these conditions may have arisen from the funding disparities between the humanities and the grant-funded scientific disciplines. I am therefore interested here in revealing the various publishing cultures of the humanities, and how OA may fit into this, which will provide a basis for exploring approaches to OA throughout the thesis.

This chapter frames the debate by introducing some of the issues relating to humanities publishing and where OA fits into this. I aim to establish that publishing is a reflection of the humanities' unique *epistemic culture* (Knorr-Cetina 1999), but also a culture that is contingent and under continual threat. In illustrating how humanities publishing currently works, I show how the norms of publishing impose a particular scholarly practice on the humanities, one that is shaped by enlightenment conceptions of authorship and intellectual property, the increased precariousness of (and competition for) employment in the humanities, and the business practices of the commercial publishing industry, among other things. Although a great deal of scholarship is engaged in critiquing these institutions and practices, the need to publish in the traditional manner tends to win out. This leads to a tension between critique and its form of publication.

The first section of the chapter offers a picture of how humanities publishing currently operates, exploring some of the values that humanities researchers attach to publishing, such as those relating to audience, prestige, publication format and authorship. This will include research on academic attitudes towards open access and publishing more generally. This section will illustrate what many understand to be the traditional understanding of humanities publishing. I will then explore some of the reasoning behind this collection of values, showing that traditional publishing practices are reinforced by processes and standards around researcher evaluation and career progression – particularly the social capital offered by prestigious presses who charge increasingly higher fees for research access. The chapter concludes with an introduction to the two main routes to OA, namely green and gold OA, and some of the literature on their relationship with humanities publishing as described.

Dominant practices in humanities publishing

Author motivations

It is worth beginning with a brief overview of the literature on how publishing currently works, what motivates humanities researchers to publish and what they value in publication choice. It is necessary to introduce this research, including survey data, not because it represents any normative value on how humanities research *should* be published, but because publishing in the humanities

does represent a dominant culture that is highly resistant to change. These norms are not necessarily reflective of humanities scholarship *per se* and instead illustrate more contingent and extrinsic factors that influence how humanities research is published. As Janneke Adema argues: ‘Values and practices underlying scholarship, such as authorship, peer review, openness, fixity, trust etc., were not developed separately from economic, cultural-institutional and technological concerns and needs but in tandem with them, showcasing both historical as well as current struggles about the past and future of the book, scholarship, and publishing’ (Adema 2015, 121). Thus, in order to understand the ways in which different approaches to OA might disrupt humanities publishing cultures, we must first understand what these cultures are.

Prior to the advent of open access there was little research on what motivates humanities researchers to publish in the ways they do. Arguably, OA has exposed the holes in our understanding of humanities publishing practices, primarily because it is ‘controversial’ as noted above, or possibly that these practices are so engrained and deeply held that they always seemed self-evident. Either way, the survey literature on humanities publishing practices has grown significantly since the turn of the twenty-first century and such articles are usually accompanied by a question on whether open access is valued by researchers when deciding how to publish their work. There is also a notable amount of research conducted by commercial publishers on the motivations of authors. These surveys are conducted for marketing purposes with the intention of justifying a publisher’s commercial position and I will not examine them here because they are so heavily biased towards a commercial end.

Tenopir et al. conducted a survey to determine the motivations of journal authors across a range of disciplines. Using survey data, the authors concluded that across all disciplines, including the arts and humanities, ‘reputation and fit with the author’s work are the two most highly-rated attributes that respondents take into consideration, followed by the journal’s audience’ (Tenopir et al. 2016, 17). This led Tenopir et al. to conclude that ‘a journal and all of its attributes is essentially a brand, with authors seeking to align themselves with top brands’ (ibid). Although these findings are based on data collected on academics from the USA, they are consistent with the 2015 Ithaka survey of UK-based researchers in which the three most important attributes for humanities researchers were that the journal is ‘circulated widely and read by academics in your field’, the journal has an ‘excellent

academic reputation’ and ‘the journal’s area of coverage is very close to my immediate area of research’ (Wolff, Rod, and Schonfeld 2015, 54). Solomon and Björk (2012) employ survey data to conclude similarly that ‘scope’ and ‘reputation’ are the two most important attributes for authors of journal articles, although this is across all disciplines rather than just the humanities, while Fenlon et al. (2016) reach the same conclusion (‘target audience’ and ‘reputation’ are the most important).

Humanities academics therefore seek to publish in reputable journals whose subject area is a close fit to the research being published. Tenopir et al. illustrate that ‘the quality of a journal matters because of the type of audience it attracts and the fit matters because of the specificity of that audience’ (Tenopir et al. 2016, 20). Importantly, the audience that matters is fellow academics in their own field, the kinds of researchers who tend to have access to articles through institutional journal subscriptions. The authors note that audiences outside of academia are significantly less important than researcher’s immediate peers. Because many of these surveys were conducted in the context of finding out the importance of OA to researchers, we also see that in none of the articles cited is open access considered a significant priority for authors of journal articles in the humanities. This is notable from the survey of UK-based academics for which the lowest priority out of the options available is: ‘the journal makes its articles freely available on the internet’ (Wolff, Rod, and Schonfeld 2015, 54). OA is not a major factor, then, for humanities researchers in deciding where to publish. This is confirmed by one of the main conclusions from Gareth Johnson’s ethnographically-informed study of OA practices in the UK. He writes, ‘practitioners presented a picture showing while engagement with OA practices was increasing, many academics remained unconcerned, apathetic or indifferent, with a myriad of practical, intellectual or ideological barriers perceived’ (G. Johnson 2017, 267). Instead, publication choice was motivated by ‘esteem-rich organs to publish in, rather than a rationalised moral imperative’ (Ibid, 268).

Peer review

One way in which reputation is determined is by a journal’s perceived editorial standards and the association of good scholarship with rigorous peer review. Across all humanities disciplines, peer review is the main method of quality

control for research outputs. As King et al. demonstrate, in their article ‘Scholarly Communication: Academic Values and Sustainable Models’: ‘Conventional peer review is so central to scholars’ perception of quality that its retention is essentially a *sine qua non* for any method of archival publication, new or old, to be effective and valued. Peer review is *the* hallmark of quality that results from external and independent valuation.’ (King et al. 2006, 4) Having a book/article reviewed by one’s peers is a necessary precondition for it to be accepted into the scholarly record. While peer review does not reveal a huge amount about the quality of the work itself, as reviews themselves are rarely made public, it is the stamp of approval required for research to be reference-able by other scholars.

However, peer review in the humanities is something of an unknown quantity. In general, it refers to the process of two or three scholars individually giving their opinion on the quality, presentation and rigour of the author’s manuscript. Reviewers are selected by the manuscript’s editor and comments are returned within a few months. The article is then revised by the author according to the reviewer’s suggestions, communicated to the authors by the editor, or declined outright for publication. It is important to note that in general reviewers do not receive any financial reward for reviewing an article (nor do editors for editing them nor authors for writing them); the benefit is often communicated as having access to cutting-edge research before it is released into the wider community. However, reviewers undertake reviews from a sense of obligation to their field rather than any pre-defined benefit. This means that academic publishing is sustained to a great extent by the free labour of working academic reviewers and editors. Publishers rely on this labour for the legitimation of their operations through the peer review and editorial processes. The system could not operate without the obligation that academics have to review the work of their peers without payment (see below for more on the academic publishing industry).

David Shatz notes the absence of humanist critiques of the peer-review process, especially when compared to the voluminous body of literature on the subject produced by social and physical scientists (Shatz 2004, 4-5). Shatz suggests that this absence of critique is due to the work required being ‘empirical’, something he claims humanities researchers are not comfortable with, or alternatively because peer review is so inextricably connected to grant-funding in the sciences that scientists are more aware of the direct correlation between peer review and career

success. It is, as Shatz argues, also likely due to the different perceptions of an article's validity: 'in the sciences you can sometimes *show* that a peer-review was wrong, while in the humanities you very rarely can' and so there is a real basis for critique in the sciences (Shatz 2004, 6). But peer review does not refer to a specific process, despite its reification in humanities disciplines, and is instead an opaque system of gatekeeping that varies from publication to publication. The absence of critique is probably due more to the secrecy of the process than anything else. Humanities researchers tend only to know about the peer review process because they both review and have been reviewed. Peer reviews are not made public, nor do publishers regularly grant researchers access to their review corpora (due to commercial sensitivity), and so there is little for researchers wanting to assess the epistemological basis of review to analyse.

Commercial concerns weigh heavily on the development and persistence of the peer review process. Pre-publication peer review has its origins in the eighteenth century, in the *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society*, the editors of which sought to decide whether the research was interesting enough to warrant spending money on the (then very expensive) printing process. The Royal Society launched a 'Committee on Papers' to determine by majority vote which papers were of 'importance or singularity of the subjects, or the advantageous manner of treating them' (Thomson 1812, 38). However, the practice of peer review, whereby reviewers assess the paper independently, did not emerge until much later and was not commonly practiced until the 1960s. Peer review was not even a standard practice for large commercial publishers until after the Cold War, as Melinda Baldwin shows (Baldwin 2017). For monographs, many commercial publishers still only peer review one chapter and a proposal rather than the full manuscript, although the Association of University Presses recommends that it is best practice to review all monographs in full before publication (Association of University Presses 2016). Peer review is thus influenced by commercial concerns and the perception of quality than mere scholarly rigour.

The opacity of peer review has led some scholars to experiment with forms of open peer review, whereby comments are made publicly on a book or article at the time of publication in order to increase speed and/or transparency of review (Fitzpatrick 2011; Ross-Hellauer 2017). Despite such experiments into alternatives, however, traditional blind peer review is central to humanities publishing, and the

association of certain journals with rigorous peer review standards helps preserve the current system of publishing by associating a journal's peer-review process with its prestige. For Kathleen Fitzpatrick, much of the lack of experimentation into alternatives simply comes down to the fact that 'We Have Never Done It That Way Before' (Fitzpatrick 2011, 16), suggesting an in-built conservatism due to inertia or the fear that critical introspection might destabilise such a deeply held belief in the peer review process.

The Monograph

The influence of prestige is especially noticeable in the humanities' reliance on monograph publishing as the dominant (and most prized) form of scholarly communication. The humanities are often described as book-based disciplines because of the primacy of the monograph in communicating research. An in-depth exploration of a single topic or issue, usually by a single author, the monograph is an example of the kind of long-form scholarship most valued within many areas of the humanities. Consequently, the monograph has been described as the 'gold standard' of humanities publishing (Borgman 2007, 214) and the 'holy grail' for career advancement (Ryan et al. 2002, 177). Humanities disciplines value long-form works of scholarship by lone authors, something which distinguishes the humanities from the sciences. It is difficult to accurately state what characteristics of the monograph, as a conduit for communicating scholarly information, makes it so central to academic discourse. However, a qualitative survey by Williams et al. of 17 arts and humanities researchers revealed the intrinsic value of the monograph for communicating 'a body of ideas or a philosophical reflection', conveying 'complex' arguments and experimenting with 'different methods within the same work' (Williams et al. 2009, 74). As such, the monograph form offers its author the chance to explore a topic in a highly individualised way and because of this, as Blaise Cronin notes, the 'text and author are tightly coupled; where the process of inscription implies intimacy with one's materials' (Cronin 2003, 6).

The inseparability of author and text that Cronin describes is one of the more distinctive features of publications in the humanities, re-enforcing a liberal-humanist understanding of authorship representative of post-enlightenment conceptions of the individual, rational, indivisible subject. Samuel Weber illustrates that the modern

university was founded upon the conception of the ‘human’ synonymous with ‘the power and potentiality of self-realization’ and ‘self-determination through labor’ (Weber 2000, no pagination). The traditional monograph is illustrative of how the enlightenment conception of authorship – the lone, self-producing scholar’s detailed assessment of a body of research – is most prized within the humanities. The monograph is thus used as a representation of the author, allowing universities to base their hiring decisions on the monograph as a reflection of the author themselves.

So, despite its persistence, the monograph is a somewhat arbitrary form of research communication. It enforces a particular kind of liberal, rationalistic argumentation through a bound, stable and fixed codex format, features that Janneke Adema terms ‘print-based essentialisms’ which have become reified and understood as intrinsic qualities to the book itself (Adema 2015, 70). Elizabeth Eisenstein makes the argument that the advent of the printing press brought with it features such as dissemination, standardization and fixity, qualities that encouraged the spread of knowledge and helped contribute to the renaissance and the development of scientific thought (Eisenstein 1980). This meant that the book was now a uniform, standardised object, introducing a level of fixity not just to the object itself, but to the relationship between author and their work. As Eisenstein writes, ‘A literary ‘Common’ became subject to ‘enclosure movements’ and possessive individualism began to characterize the attitudes of writers to their work’ (Eisenstein 1980, 120–21). The birth of print thus led to notions of intellectual property and the association of the author with their work.

Complicating Eisenstein’s notion of fixity, Adrian Johns illustrates that the development of print culture actually reveals that fixity is not an ‘inherent’ quality of the book form but a ‘transitive’ one (Johns 2003, 19). The emergence of piracy in early print cultures demonstrated a constant threat to notions of fixity, authorship and forms of accreditation. Although no doubt these concepts were important in many print contexts, it is important to realise that ‘texts, printed or not, cannot compel readers to react in specific ways, but that they must be interpreted in cultural spaces the character of which helps to decide what counts as proper reading’ (Johns 2003, 20). The book itself, as Nicholas Thoburn argues, is characterised by much ‘material complexity, anomaly and disruption, qualities central to its politicisation’ (Thoburn 2016, 9). Similarly, for Johanna Drucker, the book is best thought of as

performative, a ‘phenomenal codex’ in which the material book merely provides ‘instructions’ for the performance (Drucker 2008). Thinking of the book in these terms helps us to move beyond notions of the book as essential, fixed and subject to rigid definition and encourages us to understand its potential for fluidity, openness and a range of practices not traditionally associated with ‘the book’.

The traditional humanities monograph can be seen in this context as a specific kind of book publication, the norms of which are strongly determined by cultural and institutional assumptions of the humanities and the institutions that shape them. Adema suggests that these assumptions are ‘reproduced and fixed through our common daily practices, where they eventually become the basis of our institutions (Adema 2015, 71). As a result of this, Adema argues, the ‘salient features that have come to define the printed book look highly similar to the scholarly communication system that gets promoted within academia: one that is qualitative, stable and trustworthy’ (ibid). Academic monographs are continually and routinely rehearsed according to the standards of the traditional university press or publishing house, which in turn both reflects and shapes the assessment structures within the university itself, but particularly those that value the perceived prestige granted by the imprimatur of a university press deemed reputable. The influence of prestige has perhaps the greatest impact on the ways in which humanities researchers decide to publish their work.

[Publishing, career progression and the university](#)

It is hard to overstate the ordering effects that publishing has on the working lives of humanities researchers: projects are undertaken with specific publication formats in mind; journal choice is frequently determined by how well regarded they are by assessment panels; and there is an informal hierarchy of certain kinds of academic publication, from the monograph at the top down to co-authored works and book chapters in edited volumes towards the bottom (Tanner 2016, 7). Different publications and publishing houses connote varying levels of prestige, breadth of audience and political bent, which is reflected in Tenopir et al.’s notion above that publications are brands with which authors strive to align themselves.

The intrinsic value of the monograph as described above is far surpassed in importance by its centrality to academic career prospects, compared with other forms

of scholarly communication. While it is not clear how or why this criterion emerged, it is universally acknowledged that, across higher education in the UK, Europe and the USA, monograph publication is a fundamental requirement for most academic employment and promotion committees in the humanities (e.g., Cronin 2003; Williams et al. 2009; Cronin and La Barre 2004; Adema and Rutten 2010; Ryan et al. 2002; Stanton et al. 2007). There is a dearth of data on why the monograph is so valued over other scholarly outputs, but the answer is likely to involve a mixture of historical accident and the fact that the monograph is a single, extensive, quantifiable unit of publication that represents many years of work. Furthermore, as it is unlikely that hiring committees read all candidates' monographs in detail, the decision by an academic press to publish a manuscript is seen as a proxy for good quality work, especially if the press has a good reputation. As a consequence, it is not the task of humanities academics to simply write and publish a monograph, they also need to ensure that the publisher is sufficiently *prestigious*, i.e., one of the 'big university presses' (Williams et al. 2009, 74).

Borrowing terminology from Pierre Bourdieu, Martin Eve explores the relationship between prestige and publishing with respect to the 'symbolic capital' that a certain publisher's reputation confers:

A piece of research work is a demonstration of an author's cultural capital; it is the product of the skill, knowledge and ability of the author(s). The acceptance of such research by publishers who possess both material capital (needed to undertake the labour and effectively disseminate the work) and cultural capital (knowledge of publishing and academic systems) constitutes a payoff in the form of social capital (endorsement and support) for the author that can be re-converted back into symbolic capital (prestige/reputation) that is needed for peer respect and a job/promotion (material capital) (Eve 2014b, 45).

This overview of the various kinds of symbolic capital at work in academic publishing explains the impact of prestige on academic decisions about where to publish. Academics strive for their work to appear in prestigious venues because doing so represents a form of symbolic capital within higher education that can be used for career progression. Because of this, publishing in the humanities is not just

about the quality of the journal, its editorial standards, political leaning and audience, but also the perceived quality of the journal in the eyes of those in charge of academic careers, which may not be those with an intimate knowledge of the work itself. As a consequence, publications and presses have become proxies for the quality of the research in question, meaning that having an article published in a well-regarded journal or a monograph published with a prestigious press is representative of the research's quality and, by extension, the researcher themselves.

In the sciences, a journal's prestige is often measured by the much-criticised Impact Factor. This proprietary measure of citations – calculated each year by Clarivate Analytics – gives a score to a journal based on the number of citations each article receives on average. The Impact Factor in the sciences has a similar affect to prestige on the humanities in that it orders the publication decisions of scientific authors. However, unlike the sciences, humanities disciplines have thus far resisted citations as a measure of quality and so the Impact Factor is not applicable in the humanities. Yet, this means that humanities researchers, particularly those at an early stage in their careers, have to rely on the unwritten rules of prestige in order to navigate the publishing landscape, as opposed to a quantitative (albeit flawed) figure such as the Impact Factor.

It is useful to understand publishing as a particular feature of academic disciplines as *communities of practice*. Coined by Lave and Wenger, communities of practice (CoPs) refer to groups that are engaged in a shared enterprise, such as an academic discipline. CoPs are informally defined and membership of them is usually about learning shared repertoires and informal cultures rather than rigidly defined and explicit rules of practice. Lave and Wenger illustrate that central to communities of practice is the 'interplay' between *participation and reification* (Etienne Wenger 1998, 59). A community both participates in a practice but also reifies certain practices so they become part of the community's 'shared repertoire' (Etienne Wenger 1998, 82). In the case of humanities disciplines, the shared repertoire of publishing practices dictates that certain publications are more valued than others, according to the unwritten rules of prestige, and this forms the basis of what counts for career progression.

The REF and academic ‘excellence’

In UK universities, the Research Excellence Framework (REF) has the biggest impact on publishing decisions of humanities researchers. Occurring once every five or six years, the REF is the government’s primary way of distributing funding to humanities researchers based on the quality of each department’s research portfolios. Publications are awarded funding based on the number of 1-4-star publications it has, with four stars representing ‘quality that is world-leading in terms of originality, significance and rigour’ (HEFCE 2014a). The REF is a huge undertaking and it is difficult to overstate the impact it has on the working lives of academics: many academic job descriptions will require evidence of ‘3 or 4-star’ publications and departments regularly hold practice REF exercises, entailing a considerable amount of work on the part of a department. As Marina Warner writes in the *London Review of Books*, ‘Everyone in academia had come to learn that the REF is the currency of value. A scholar whose works are left out of the tally is marked for assisted dying’ (Warner 2014, no pagination). This is why, as I will explore in Chapter 3 of the thesis, the OA policy for the REF will have such an impact on university departments and the practices of humanities researchers.

The impact of the REF is intensified by the competition for permanent employment, particular at the early-career level of humanities researchers. Only 9.3% of PhD graduates in the arts and humanities go into research positions in higher education, as of 2010, although 36.9% continue to teach in higher education (Vitae 2013, 15), a role associated more with temporary contracts. In competition for an ever-shrinking job pool, junior researchers increasingly look to gain a competitive advantage through the number of publications they have in reputable journals. This has led one anonymous academic to declare that they struggle to appoint the best candidate for an academic job because they are all equally overqualified: ‘They’ve gained teaching and admin experience, published books and papers (and planned the next ones), thought about impact and outreach, and earned an impressive set of references and student feedback in addition to their outstanding formal qualifications’ (Anonymous Academic 2018). Academia has become something of an arm’s race as the expectations of candidates applying for entry-level academic positions continues to increase.

The intensely competitive job market has coincided with the marketisation and neoliberalisation of the university more generally. As the government withdraws funding from higher education and replaces it with tuition fees, universities are forced to perform as businesses, conforming to market logic through competition and the need for academics to be financially sustainable through their own grant income (Rolfe 2013, 11). A new layer of managers and administrators has led to what Hugo Radice describes how the ‘values, structures and processes of private sector management are imposed upon the public sector; key elements include a shift from professional to executive power, a focus on ‘performance’ as measured by quantitative targets, and the widespread use of financial incentives’ (Radice 2013, 408). Publication is one important disciplinary mechanism through which performance is measured, which forces academics as individuals to publish widely and regularly for their own job security. This individualism can be understood in Foucauldian terms as academics needing to be *entrepreneurs of themselves* under neoliberalism: ‘being for himself his own capital, being for himself his own producer, being for himself the source of [his] earnings’ (Foucault 2008, 226). The university is thus a site of precarity in which academics are forced to constantly prove their worth through a series of audits and performance measures – and publication is key part of this.

Bill Readings charts the shift in global higher education as moving from a university of culture, aimed at the ‘production of national subjects’ (Readings 1996, 46), to a university of excellence. Readings writes:

The appeal to excellence marks the fact that there is no longer any idea of the University, or rather that the idea has lost all content. As a non-referential unit of value entirely internal to the system, excellence marks nothing more than the moment of technology’s self-reflection. All that the system requires is for activity to take place, and the empty notion of excellence refers to nothing other than the optimal input/output ratio in matters of information (Readings 1996, 39).

The university is no longer an arm of the nation state, then, but an ‘autonomous bureaucratic corporation’ (ibid, 40) that does not function in accordance with any political logic, but with an economic logic that continually needs to justify its

existence to the state. An appeal to ‘excellence’ is the way by which this justification is made, rather than to any particular ideology. Consequently, for Readings, the university is a ‘relatively autonomous consumer-oriented corporation’ (ibid, 11).

Despite that Reading’s book *The University in Ruins* is over twenty years old, its diagnosis has stood the test of time. Excellence continues to be the dominant unit of measurement in the contemporary university, despite it being a term completely devoid of any meaningful content (Moore et al. 2017). From the perspective of the Research Excellence Framework, for example, excellence and publication are inextricably linked. ‘Excellence’ is used as a way to channel funding to academic departments from the government and this process is mediated by the quality of a department’s publications and particularly the reputations of the presses and journals in which they appear. Irrespective of HEFCE’s protestations that the reputation of a journal or press should *not* be taken into account in REF assessments (Bishop 2013), the idea of 3 and 4-star publications representing top journals and prestigious presses has been internalised by academics to such an extent that it orders the publication strategies of most academics and the expectations of academic departments.

Unsurprisingly, then, the most common form of publication submitted to Panel D (the ‘humanities’ panel) of the REF is the journal article, which accounted for roughly one third of all outputs assessed, followed by book chapters and then the authored book, which each accounted for roughly a fifth of the submissions (HEFCE 2014b). Bearing in mind the authored book, usually a monograph by a single author, is normally around 80,000 words and represents significantly more effort than a journal article, which is usually 8-12,000 words, we can see that the authored book is highly valued by universities submitting to the REF. Given this, it is clear that academic hiring decisions are often based on whether the candidate has published a monograph (or has one under contract) with a prestigious press.

Although the REF is not the only source of influence on the working and publication practices of the average humanities researcher, its significance helps illustrate what is valued within humanities publishing beyond mere subject matter. This is to say that institutional requirements impose a kind of publication on the humanities and prevent deviation from the norm or experimentation into alternative forms of research presentation and publication. In fact, the publication cultures of the humanities actually conflict with much of the subject matter explored by humanities

researchers, and many of their working methods too, adding a tension within the *epistemic culture* of many humanities disciplines.

The humanities' 'epistemic culture'

The assessment structures imposed on the humanities by governments, funders and institutions tend to prioritise the kind of scholarship most represented by the monograph form, i.e., rational, liberal-humanist, paper-centric, single-authored and verified through the blind peer-review process. All of these elements comprise the epistemic culture of the humanities, which Knorr-Cetina defines as 'those amalgams of arrangements and mechanisms—bonded through affinity, necessity, and historical coincidence—which in a given field make up *how we know what we know*' (Knorr-Cetina 1999, 1, emphasis original). In order to be recognisable and assessed as humanities scholarship, publications in the humanities usually need to conform to a majority of the conditions outlined above. This is due to a mixture of 'affinity, necessity, and historical coincidence' (ibid) rather than because such conditions are intrinsic to humanities research itself. Given this, the publication process reinforces the expectations of humanities scholarship, encouraging a conservatism that works against anything new or different.

For example, there is nothing necessary about humanities scholarship that requires its presentation in textual form. Arguments by theorists such as Vilém Flusser and Walter J. Ong point to a variety of alternative media for communication, such as the primacy of orality to certain cultures (Ong 1982) or the possible futures of photographic forms of communication (Flusser 2002), and the different assumptions of these media that differ from those of written communication. There are also many experiments in alternative forms of research presentation, from video articles published in the *Journal of Embodied Research* to the audio, photographic and interactive articles published in the *Disrupted Journal of Media Practice* (2018). In each case, the research presented illustrates that textual forms of presentation are not integral to humanities scholarship, even though alternative forms of research presentation are not valued in the same way.

This is also the case with digital humanities projects, many of which are assessed by traditional review practices as articles or books, rather than as born-digital projects that are unfinished and constantly being developed. In contrast with

the apparent collaborative nature of digital, software-based humanities research, many digital humanities projects need to conform to the standards of the traditional humanities epistemic culture. As Nyhan and Duke-Williams find, despite its claim to a collaborative discipline, publications in top digital humanities journals are predominantly single-authored. This suggests that co-authorship is not valued by the journal or methods of assessment and that DH publications need to conform to traditional modes of assessment even if their modes of production depart from these traditions. Consequently, for Roopika Risam, digital humanities projects are best understood ‘as part of an ongoing trend in academic discourse prevalent enough to require rethinking the production of academic value’ (Risam 2014, no pagination).

Indeed, any understanding of academic value also needs to consider the gulf in humanities research between theory and publishing practice. The humanities involve not just the study of human culture and society, but critique of the very structures that give order to these concepts, including power, capitalism, the digital, gender, race, disciplinarity, and the very idea of ‘the human’ itself. Yet the content of academic critique is rarely reflected in the forms of its dissemination, with academics required to publish in large, commercial, for-profit publishing houses such as Routledge and Palgrave Macmillan, or university presses that increasingly employ the practices of (and are often distributed by) commercial publishers. Even the self-described left-wing political press Verso Books is a private, for-profit, shareholder-owned company. Again, the reputation of a press, and the cultural capital it grants the author, is the primary factor for authors deciding where to submit their work, rather than their business practices, ethical considerations or production standards. This is the case even when those practices directly conflict with the subject matter or the politics of the work itself. Gary Hall writes:

[Humanities academics] may think about politics in relation to culture and society or even other parts of the media (e.g., the BBC, Twitter, algorithmic regulation and surveillance). Yet unless they are involved in the movements for Creative Commons, open access, free software, peer-to-peer file sharing, or pro-piracy—and even then in many cases—they do not spend too much time reflecting on the politics of their own knowledge production, let alone trying to challenge or change it (Hall 2016a, 10).

This means that there is a tension at the heart of the humanities epistemic culture between the theories and practices of humanities researchers. They may adopt a range of theoretical standpoints to their work, critiquing a host of political, ethical and institutional practices in the process, but the work's legitimacy is still primarily conferred to the publication if it is funnelled through a codex-based publishing system and packaged in a way that conforms with a traditional understanding of what a humanities publication is. These traditional publishing practices are continually rehearsed and reinforced by academic publishers who play a central role in both the dissemination of research and the credentialing of academics for employment purposes. This dual purpose of credentialing and dissemination has had profound economic effects on the publishing market and the ability of institutions to purchase content particularly from large corporate publishers. This state of affairs is one of the central motivations of the open access movement.

The academic publishing industry

The social science and humanities publishing industry is worth roughly \$5 billion in 2015, or 20% the size of the science, technology and medicine market (openAIRE 2017, 18). Having been increasingly commercialised since 1945, academic publishing is a huge industry that has evolved from an academic service managed by learning societies and university presses, who had no expectation on making money from the content produced, to an industry generating revenue of many billions in revenue each year. Academic publishing has been consolidated and is now concentrated within a small number of large publishers – Elsevier, Taylor and Francis, Springer-Nature and Wiley – and a large number of small ones (Larivière, Haustein, and Mongeon 2015). Fyfe et al. explain how new commercial approaches to academic publishing meant that presses began focusing on primary research papers rather than periodicals, selling them to institutions worldwide (as opposed to giving them away for free to institutions, as in the old system) (Fyfe et al. 2017, 9). This meant commercial publishing went from being something of a cottage industry to a profitable international market. The marketisation continued to increase through to today, resulting in the so-called serials crisis.

The 'serials crisis' refers to the increase in journal subscription costs above inflation, particularly since the mid-1990s through to today, such that library budgets are unable to subscribe to all the content they require (Eve 2014b, 16). This was in part due to the savviness of entrepreneurs such as Robert Maxwell who in the 1970s and 80s, as the owner of Pergamon Publishing, created hundreds of scientific journals under the assumption that libraries would subscribe to any content that appeared to be reputable (Buranyi 2017). Libraries soon became locked into a system of subscribing to journals that their academics wanted to both read and publish in, meaning that journal publishers could easily raise the prices in the knowledge that libraries were likely to continue subscribing. This situation is due to the dual function of scholarly publishing for both credentialing academics and conveying knowledge. Academics are judged by the reputations of the journals they publish in, and they also need to read the work of academics on their field, and so they continue to publish in the same reputable journals to which libraries must subscribe. If these two functions were separate, academics would have more autonomy to choose their publication venue, rather than publishing for career reasons.

Yet the serials crisis is often framed as primarily a scientific concern despite impacting on the humanities in an indirect way. As described above, the humanities are also book-based disciplines and the economics of the serials crisis have impacted libraries' ability to purchase monographs by forcing them to dip into monograph budgets in order to pay for scientific journals (see Figure 1). Such a situation also has implications for the monograph market as a whole, particularly the number of monographs that university presses are able to publish. Writing in 1999 Robert Darnton commented:

Commercial publishers have raised the price of periodicals, especially in the natural sciences, to such a height that they have created havoc in the budgets of research libraries. In order to maintain their collections of periodicals, libraries have cut back drastically in the purchases of monographs. Faced with the decline in orders from libraries, university presses have virtually ceased publishing in the fields for which there is the least demand (Darnton 1999, no pagination).

This points to how the economics of publishing is a driver of access inequality. As journal prices increase, monograph sales go down and access to scholarly material becomes restricted, a trend that has only intensified since Darnton was writing (ARL Libraries 2012).

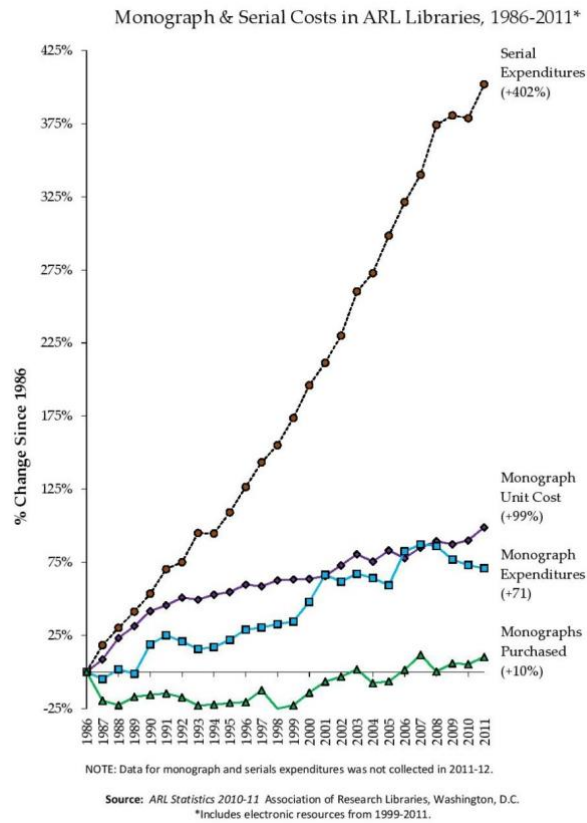


Figure 1. Monograph & Serial Costs in ARL Libraries, 1986-2011 (ARL Libraries 2012)

The trend towards marketisation has also affected North American university press publishing, with universities increasingly having to break even or turn a profit as their subsidies are withdrawn by their host institutions (L. Waters 2004, 5; Ryan et al. 2002, 172). The university press was originally conceived as an important part of the university's mission, publishing works with little expectation of a return on investment. Writing in 1967, Gene R. Hawes argued how such publishing subsidies allowed university presses to publish books that would otherwise 'not appear', but that they could do so 'only when the press has some form of subsidy from its university—its quarters, often its internal services, and sometimes part or all of its payroll subsidized by the university' (Hawes 1967, 127). Humanities publishing, particularly monograph publishing, can be a highly specialised, editorially-intensive

undertaking, requiring a significant capital investment on the behalf of a press. A recent report by the Ithaka consultancy puts the average cost to produce a university press monograph at \$39,892, comprising staff time, overheads, production costs, marketing, editorial support and alike (Maron et al. 2016). As subsidies receive ‘increased scrutiny’ from their host institutions (Sherman 2014), and monograph sales decrease, university presses are forced to adapt to the new commercial environment by publishing titles with the intent of commercial success – or what Ryan et al. term an ‘emphasis on the bottom line’ (Ryan et al. 2002, 174).

The marketisation of publishing has therefore had a different impact on the humanities to the sciences. As the humanities and social sciences receive significantly less funding than the sciences, roughly 1% of the total research budgets of the EU between 2007 and 2013 (Terras et al. 2013), publishers have focused more on the lucrative scientific market at the expense of the humanities and social sciences. But with this said, commercial publishers also now publish more than three times the number of scholarly books of university presses (Greco and Spendley 2016, 106). Scholarly books published by commercial publishers can often cost hundreds of pounds and are usually released in series to encourage libraries to subscribe to a complete package irrespective of the cost (e.g., Palgrave Macmillan 2018).

But despite both its privatisation and marketisation, humanities researchers still provide the editorial labour, usually unremunerated, that underpins much of scholarly communication. Commercial publishers may return some of their revenue back to learned societies for travel bursaries and administrative costs, but humanities researchers are not primarily responsible for the governance and ownership of scholarly communication. Much of the discourse on OA, as we will see in the next chapter, focuses more on access to research and less on the structures that govern how this research is produced. It is thus important to keep in mind the unique epistemic cultures within the humanities when assessing approaches to OA, but it is also vital to consider issues around how ownership and governance of scholarly communications might inform the access on offer. Different approaches to OA, as will be explored throughout the thesis, may offer an escape from some of the pernicious effects of marketisation and neoliberalisation of the academy, or they may simply rehearse the kinds of values already on display here.

The final section of this chapter introduces some of the routes to OA in the humanities and how they might jar with or build on current publishing practices. In doing this, I present some of the approaches to OA in the humanities, and the common criticisms of them from humanities researchers, in order to provide context to the complex landscape in which scholar-led presses and policymakers are intervening.

Introducing open access in the humanities

Despite the fact that OA is often presented as a scientific concern, many proponents of open forms of publishing are themselves more associated with humanities disciplines. There are distinct arguments in favour of OA from scholars in fields such as cultural studies, literature and philosophy and I will outline a few here. For the philosopher Peter Suber, an early proponent of freely accessible research, OA ‘benefits literally everyone’ in the same way that research does (Suber 2012, ix). Suber argues for the utilitarian gains of OA that allow readers to find and cite the research they need, meaning that authors are read and cited and that society in turn will benefit from contributions to ‘new medicines, useful technologies, solved problems, informed decisions, improved policies, and beautiful understanding’ (ibid). Similarly, although humanities disciplines may take longer to transition to OA than the sciences, as the economics of humanities publishing differ, Martin Eve argues that access to research is beneficial to the humanities for discovery, verification, refutation and validation of scholarly research (Eve 2014b, 26). Both arguments illustrate the ways in which greater research access could improve the research process.

John Willinsky makes a different argument by appealing to the intrinsic benefits of research access. For him, the research process itself carries with it ‘a responsibility to extend the circulation of such work as far as possible and ideally to all who are interested in it and all who might profit by it’ (Willinsky 2006, xii). Willinsky’s ‘access principle’ appeals to an idea of the research process as necessarily something that should be public facing. For him, access is a feature of the research process itself and carries with it a responsibility on the part of authors to share their publications as widely as possible. Willinsky’s argument is a liberal one, appealing to notions of democracy, human rights and an educated public as

justification for OA. He writes: ‘Open access will add to the political stature and value of research in this way, as researchers see their work contributing more than it currently does to the weighing of facts, consequences, and alternatives in democratic processes’ (Willinsky 2006, 142).

For other humanities researchers, OA is neither an intrinsic good nor one with identifiable extrinsic benefits, but a moment in which to rethink and experiment with the ways in which humanities researchers publish their work. Kathleen Fitzpatrick, for example, in her book *Planned Obsolescence* argues for the possibility of open ways of working to reimagine how humanities scholarship is conducted. For Fitzpatrick, ‘digital networks, as structures that facilitate interaction, communication, and interconnection, will require us to think differently about what it is we’re doing as we write’ (Fitzpatrick 2011, ‘overview’). This will entail rethinking those reified humanistic conceptions of peer review, authorship, publication and the university itself, a holistic reassessment of humanities research of which ‘open access’ is one key component. In a similar vein, Janneke Adema positions a certain experimental reading of OA against more neoliberal readings that simply conform to market measurement. For Adema, OA offers the possibility to ‘change the cultures of material and technological production that surround scholarly communication in such a way as to allow for alternative, more ethical, critical and responsible forms of research’ (Adema 2015, 143). In a related sense, Gary Hall points illustrates the ‘ethical and political questions open-access archiving raises for academic and institutional authority and legitimacy, and the way it promises to transform and redefine our relationship to knowledge’ (Hall 2008, 54).

Fitzpatrick, Adema and Hall each in different ways emphasise the *moment* that OA presents: it is exploratory, experimental and represents potential rather than anything decided or fixed. My own understanding of OA can be situated in this space too. Yet my focus on OA in the humanities perhaps differs from these authors through my starting point that OA in the UK is happening *irrespective of whether or not humanities researchers support it*. Unlike, for example, scholarship on peer-to-peer technologies, the digital commons or even piracy, which each have the potential to disrupt humanities research, OA has received international recognition and national legitimacy through the UK governmental policy framework. It is therefore something that needs to be thought through at both the level of politics and the grassroots, in order to put forward an agenda for a responsible and ethical approach

to OA. A comparison might be made to the current discourse on technological automation and the future of work. With governments and businesses increasingly investing in technologies for automating work across a variety of sectors, thinkers on the left have put forward their own theories of *accelerationism* (Srnicek and Williams 2015) and *Xenofeminism* (Hester 2018) to advance our understanding of how automated technologies might be used for progressive/post-capitalist ends. In doing this, they present a counterpoint to neoliberal capitalist approaches to automation that both engages with the political realities and puts forward a vision for how such a programme might be achieved. My understanding of OA in the humanities similarly tries to negotiate between the political agenda of a pro-business conception free access to research and the possibilities of advancing an experimental and emancipatory programme for OA in the humanities.

Routes to open access

OA can be achieved in a variety of ways, each with its own advantages and drawbacks for humanities publication. These include a range of economic issues, such as business models and the resulting impact on the many and various presses that make up the publishing industry. OA is complicated by a range of both philosophical, disciplinary and pragmatic considerations that work against the possibility of a transition from a ‘closed’ ecosystem to an ‘open’ one. Yet two distinct approaches have emerged that represent unique, but not uncomplimentary, methods for achieving open access, namely green and gold OA (Guéron 2004). Although I explore the histories of these various approaches to OA in the next chapter, the following section sketches the OA landscape and its relationship to the kinds of humanities publishing practices described in the material covered so far.

Green OA

Green OA is provided through institutional and subject repositories, running in parallel with the formal processes for journal and book publishing. Green OA is rarely the primary method of releasing a publication but is instead a way of providing access to research (usually in accordance with certain publisher-imposed restrictions) to those who do not have access to the version of record via a subscription. In some scientific fields, such as high-energy physics and increasingly

the biological sciences, repositories are used for rapid dissemination through so-called preprints, and the formal publication process happens after the article is shared through a repository. However, preprints are less common in the humanities, where the subject matter is less dependent on speed of dissemination, and research is usually shared via a repository at the time of acceptance or publication.

But because formal publication still occurs in a traditional book or journal, green OA is achieved in accordance with publisher restrictions. Researchers frequently transfer copyright to publishers at the point of publication, meaning that publishers are able to determine how content is shared. Given this, publishers are able to impose a number of restrictions on green OA, such as whether the final typeset paper can be shared, the open-access license used and any embargoes on when the paper can be made publicly available.¹ These restrictions are justified by publishers as a way of protecting their ability to monetise the content they own, as libraries will no longer pay for content if it is freely available elsewhere, the argument goes. For example, embargo length is determined by the citation ‘half-life’ meaning the number of years it takes for a paper to receive half its citations on average. For slower-moving humanities fields, this half-life can be many years, despite there being no evidence that shorter embargos would impact on a library’s willingness to subscribe to a journal (Kingsley 2015; K. Smith 2014).

Alongside publisher restrictions, green OA is also more associated with mandates and policies for open access. Such policies, mandated by universities, funders and governments, require researchers to deposit their research in a repository as a condition of their funding or employment. This is the basis for the HEFCE policy for open access – which will be analysed in Chapter 3 – and countless other institutional policies for OA. Arguably, green OA has the connotations of something punitive: uploading work to a repository represents an additional burden on the workloads of researchers and they are penalised for not doing so. For some, such as David Golumbia, this burden is indicative of the advocate’s claim that humanities research is ‘unproductive vis-à-vis capital’ and therefore exploitable by everyone ‘except the author’ (Golumbia 2016, 101). In mandating green OA, Golumbia argues, universities presume that they have a strong ownership claim to the research

¹ Often with a complex set of conditions that confuse authors and university staff (Andrew 2014).

published by their employees, and so forcing academics to share their intellectual property actually alienates academics from the products of their labour (ibid, 99).

Columbia's argument is problematic because it fails to appreciate the symbolic capital that academics benefit from through publishing their work (as described above). Although academics do earn book royalties from their work, these rarely amount to much and the rewards from publishing are not monetary but symbolic (Eve 2014b, 58). Academic salaries are intended to cover the time taken on writing and publishing, even if academics are required to take on more research, teaching and administration than ever before. There are many exceptions to this, such as independent researchers without salaries or those who do make a great deal of money from trade publishing, but in general OA is possible because humanities researchers do not make money from selling their intellectual property but from the cultural capital accrued from publishing in particular prestigious outlets. Green OA, for this reason, is pragmatic and intends to work with the epistemic cultures of the humanities, and the requirements of publishers, in order to make research freely available.

But this pragmatism is also one of the main problems with green OA, which fails to engage with the publishing industry (and notions of prestige) and instead requires a large effort on the part of librarians, researchers and technical staff for incremental benefits and duplicated effort. Green OA requires assent from the publishing industry (that determines embargo length) and cannot therefore directly disrupt or undermine the practices of traditional publishing. Though it is effective in achieving access to research papers, subject to delays and other conditions, on its own green OA is limited in its emancipatory potential from commercial publishing but would simply reinforce publisher dominance. This does not mean that green OA is not important, as it certainly represents a useful and relatively straightforward workaround for academics who do want to make their work freely available in accordance with publisher restrictions. However, green OA is still beholden to the very industry the open access movement sought to problematise in the first place.

So, while there is no necessary reason why academics could not stop publishing in books and journals *en masse*, releasing their work only through institutional and subject repositories, their attachment to traditional publishing would be a strong inhibitor of doing so. This is the case for research published in the high-energy physics discipline, which is released into the arXiv repository as soon as it is

ready and then subsequently submitted to a journal for peer-review purposes after it has been circulated within their community (Kling and McKim 2000). Despite their research being almost entirely open access via green OA, high-energy physics researchers still spend ‘considerable money and effort’ in maintaining journal publishing industry for accreditation purposes, especially for career reasons (Delfanti 2016, 1). Even where access is divorced from accreditation, physics researchers still need to sustain the journal publishing industry for the cultural capital they offer. There is no obvious reason why this would be different for humanities researchers.

Gold OA

The main alternative to green OA is access provided at the point of publication through the book or journal itself, so-called gold OA. Here, the publication is released in an openly accessible form, often under a Creative Commons licence that permits a certain amount of adaption and reuse by readers. Unlike with green OA, gold OA does not run in parallel with the traditional publishing process but instead modifies it by making the final version of record immediately open access. Gold OA therefore has greater implications for the economics of publishing than green OA, simply because publishers are not selling the final publication (at least, not all versions of it) and must look to recover costs in other ways. For this reason, gold OA is associated with a range of business models for cost recovery, but also DIY efforts with no observable business model, like the kinds practiced by scholar-led publishers.

One of the common associations with gold OA is the article-processing charge (APC), which is levied by publishers and paid by authors for the cost of publishing an article. Even though editorial work is provided for free by academics, there are still many services associated with certain forms of book and journal publishing, such as typesetting, marketing, peer-review management, copyediting and indexing (Vann 2017), for which publishers look to recover cost. The charge can total many thousands of pounds for an individual journal article (Lawson 2015) and much more for a book-processing charge (Pinter 2018), although APCs are intended to come out of an author’s grant funding rather than their own personal income. The opacity of how such processing charges has also led many to call for increased transparency in how they are calculated (Tennant 2018), alongside greater

transparency of the ‘financial flows’ in scholarly communication more generally (Lawson, Gray, and Mauri 2016).

As is frequently pointed out with gold OA based on APCs, humanities disciplines in general do not have access to regular and consistent grant funding that would cover the cost of such charges. This has led some humanities researchers to worry about a new system of publishing based on ‘paying to say’ (Mandler 2014; Allington 2013). Such a system of publishing would reduce access inequities but deny a voice to those who could not pay, for example most humanities researchers, independent researchers or those not from well-funded research disciplines in the Global North. As Martin Eve points out, although there is enough money in global scholarly communications to cover the current rate of publication, ‘there is an insufficiently equitable distribution of capital among institutions to allow everyone to have access, an aspect that could just be reversed to the supply side through article or book processing charges for gold open access if care is not taken’ (Eve 2014b, 69–70)., Article-processing charges would jar with humanities publishing practices without a significant overhaul of (and increase in) humanities funding.

But, crucially, gold open access does not refer only to access through article-processing charges, but a range of ways in which books and journals can be made freely available in their published form.² In fact, the majority of open access journals do not charge APCs (Lawson, Gray, and Mauri 2016). There are instead a range of funding arrangements for gold OA: funding consortia (e.g., Open Library of Humanities and Knowledge Unlatched) whereby libraries each pay small sums of money to make content freely available (Montgomery 2014); ‘freemium’ whereby one version of a book or article is freely available and operations are sustained through selling enhanced versions (Mounier 2012). There are also related ‘shades’ of gold open access: diamond open access being a form of OA that does not utilise processing charges but is also explicitly not-for-profit and seeks to make academic knowledge a ‘common good’ (Fuchs and Sandoval 2013). Furthermore, many OA presses in the humanities eschew the idea of ‘business models’ altogether and instead publish books and journals in their free time on a shoe-string budget, as we will see in Chapter 4.

² Some (e.g., Haschak 2007) refer to non-APC gold OA as ‘platinum’, though this is by no means as common as ‘green’ and ‘gold’.

The point I want to make here is that although gold OA does not entail any particular business model (certainly not one based on processing charges), it is a useful term for distinguishing between repository-based (green) OA, especially as the UK policies for OA are adopt both gold and green strategies. For Fuchs and Sandoval, the vagueness of gold OA represents a ‘conceptual limit’ because it does not entail any particular values, progressive or otherwise (ibid, 429). While this may be true, it is necessary to understand that different forms of OA *do* represent different economics (and values) and that all forms of OA take a certain amount of labour and/or finances, even the most DIY, informal and ephemeral forms. Gold OA is a useful term because it is not restricted to any particular model. This opens up a space for a reassessment of the economics of publishing and, in particular, how it could be reworked in various ways to reimagine the relationship between publishing, humanities disciplines and the university, specifically with respect to OA. The case studies presented here of policy-based and scholar-led approaches to OA will explore these issues in detail.

Conclusion

I have shown here that publishing practices in the humanities are, in general, highly conservative and bound by the need for humanities researchers to publish in ways that benefit their careers and conform to their epistemic culture. This conservatism works against the possibility of humanities researchers critically engaging with their publishing practices and ensures that publishing continues relatively unexamined. As publishing itself has been increasingly marketised, in parallel with the neoliberalisation of higher education, humanities researchers have ceded control of the ownership and governance of their publications to for-profit companies and underfunded university presses forced to adopt the practices of businesses. This situation has resulted not only in the serials crisis, whereby journals prices have increased significantly above inflation and (library budget increases), but also a situation in which libraries are forced to buy fewer monographs to continue subscribing to all the journals their (scientific) researchers require.

It is worth bearing in mind that I am presenting here the dominant, or hegemonic, publishing culture in the humanities. There are, of course, alternatives to this culture that seek to resist, politicise and experiment with traditional academic

publishing processes, and some of them will be analysed in this thesis. But in general, these alternative practices are not rewarded by the academy in the same way as those described above. Publishing is therefore a homogenising influence on the humanities, even when much of the work of critical theorists, cultural studies academics, digital humanists, and other humanities scholars, pushes towards something all the more heterogeneous in terms of both form and content.

By introducing OA towards the end of this chapter, I have shown that out of the two main routes to it, gold OA might allow a chance to reassess the economics of publishing and therefore some of the practices associated with it. Though this is not to assume an essentialist understanding of green vs. gold OA, as neither entail any particular form of politics or ethics. But in practice, green OA is more likely to be beholden to the publishing industry, as I have shown. In the case of both green or gold OA, work is always needed to understand the politics of a project at the individual level, rather than the various discursive constructions and rhetoric to which it conforms. From the perspective of a ‘controversy’ as conceived in the introduction, different forms of OA may jar with a number of aspects of the humanities epistemic culture, either through the funding issues with APCs, the additional burden uploading research to repositories, or the difficulty of covering the upfront cost to produce OA monographs.

Keeping this picture in mind throughout the thesis, the next chapter delves into the histories of open access, looking to understand its many motivations and lineages in order to illustrate the various projects that operate under the banner of ‘open access’ and the values associated with them. A better understanding of both humanities publishing practices and the histories of OA will therefore allow for an assessment of separate OA projects and policies, particularly with respect to their transformational potential for humanities publishing and higher education more generally.

Chapter 2. Exploring the histories of open access

Introduction

The concept of OA is understood differently between communities of practice from across disciplines, institutions, countries and positions. Broadly speaking, OA refers to the removal of price and permission restrictions to scholarly research. OA research is free to read and use by anyone with access to a stable internet connection. This definition is generally consistent across communities, although some insist on a specific, permission-free approach to OA licensing, while others specifically discourage the use of liberal licensing with strict limits to reuse. However, it is the motivations for, and routes to, OA that differ substantially between communities, as I explore in this chapter.

The development of OA reveals a number of different lineages, from the formalising of pre-existing preprint cultures via subject repositories and the emergence of institutional repositories, to the free culture and open-source software movements. These separate lineages do not make for a consistent set of values associated with OA, especially against the backdrop of unique disciplinary publishing cultures (such as those in the humanities explored in the previous chapter). In order to understand some of the values of OA in the humanities, and its potential to disrupt publishing practices in the humanities, it is necessary to explore the histories of the concept of OA: how it originated and developed broadly within these two separate cultures and how the two distinct lineages continue to impact on OA today. This will help establish that OA carries with it some conceptual complexity and is not agreed upon or static.

The complexity of OA has a number of consequences for the governmental policies and scholar-led approaches analysed in the following three chapters. It will show that each is intervening in an antagonistic and non-consensual space that has originated in a variety of ideologies and positions, rather than a movement of advocates all working towards the same goal. Prioritising some of the motivations in this lineage over others will result in quite different consequences for how OA is

practiced and understood, particularly from the an ethico-political perspective. This will have ramifications for how the governmental funders and scholar-led presses approach OA as something that suits their ends.

The chapter traces a route through the two distinct lineages of OA that have in various ways converged in contemporary understandings of the term. Analysing both discursive and non-discursive examples, I illustrate how some formulations of OA derive from attempts to provide cost-free access to research works, such as those associated with institutional repositories, subject repositories or early OA journals on the web. In contrast, there are approaches that derive more from open-source software, such as those associated with new journals in the biological sciences or those advocating *libre* Creative Commons licences. These approaches emphasise the *open* nature of research: it should be reusable and re-mixable, often for commercial purposes, in a similar way that open-source software is. Further still, I illustrate the unique motivations for OA, and routes to it, that can be found within these two distinct lineages, such as the desire to reduce subscription prices or to promote a particular political position, be it market-based or progressive.

I employ a critical-discursive approach to understand the many ways in which OA came into being, in order to illustrate the term as multiple, processual and reflective of a range of motivations. This understanding lends itself to what Star and Griesemer term a ‘boundary object’, a concept that has a specific understanding in a local community of practice but is rigid enough to maintain its definition across communities as well (Star and Griesemer 1989). Boundary objects are loosely defined such that they can be recognised between communities of practice, and permit collaboration between members of different communities of practice, but they are nuanced enough to allow for specific understandings that give rise to individualised practices within them. The OA ‘movement’, as I explore, has been successful precisely because different communities have been able to rally around its imprecise definition. This is despite the fact that the movement’s history also illustrates how OA has a variety of meanings that may be subject to a range of hegemonic struggles and disagreements between communities. Although this history will be always incomplete and simplified, it will nevertheless highlight that a range of values are on display across a number of OA projects.

Openness

The opening section of this chapter focuses on the *openness* side of the history of OA, as opposed to the history that derives more from access to scholarly research. Here it will become clear that a significant part of the move towards OA evolved from the understanding of publications as *open*, i.e., as connected to the histories of free culture and open-source software. While there is overlap between the two lineages, the focus of *openness* over *access* often determines a particular approach to OA, and has resulted in conflicting policies from funders, institutions and governments worldwide.

In a general sense, openness refers to the degree to which a thing or action is freely accessible. It implies freedom: the extent to which a particular action, resource or concept is free to perform, access or use. It also implies transparency, where, for example, one speaks frankly and does not self-censor. Similarly, with respect to the topic at hand, there is a long-running association between science, or academic research more generally, and openness. As Christine Borgman shows, science benefits from the ‘open exchange of ideas’ and depends on ‘wide and rapid dissemination of new knowledge so that findings can be discarded if they are unreliable or built on if they are confirmed’ (Borgman 2007). This to say that the tradition of sharing work with one’s peers through publication, and the openness this entails, is embedded in the scientific process itself and considered one of Merton’s norms of science (Long 2001, 6).

From a more humanistic angle, one might look to enlightenment projects such as the Republic of Letters for a similar example of scholarly openness and the exchange of ideas. These networks of scholarly correspondence by wealthy ‘learned gentlemen’ in the early modern period are often cited as early examples of scholarly openness, even a ‘prefiguration’ of the open access movement itself (van Miert 2016, 281). Through European postal networks they shared works-in-progress, manuscripts and other writings on matters of the day. As Dirk van Miert argues, the Republic of Letters was based on a moral code of ‘modesty, friendliness, openness, constancy, patience, forgiveness and industry’ (van Miert 2016, 270). Openness, in this sense, is associated with collegiality, cordiality and tolerance for the criticism of one’s work.³

³ Between upper-class, white men only, of course.

But ‘openness’ in contemporary use appears to be a term with multiple understandings and no fixed definition. It is cited by governments, startups and organisations as integral to their ‘philosophy’, usually without further explanation of the term. As Nathaniel Tkacz argues: ‘Somewhat ironically, once something is labelled open, it seems that no more description is needed...[O]penness is the answer to everything and what we all agree upon.’ (Tkacz 2014, 37). A good entry point into openness is Tkacz’s recent monograph *Wikipedia and the Politics of Openness* (2014). Here, the author explores the political foundations of the term looking particularly at openness-in-practice within the Wikipedia community.

Tkacz traces a line from Karl Popper’s conservative work *The Open Society and Its Enemies* to the open-source movement of the 1980s and beyond, focusing in particular on how this continues to influence contemporary understandings within open movements (software, data, access, etc.). He describes Popper’s notion of the open society as one that is free of ‘unchallengeable truths’ or ‘so-called universal laws of history or destiny’ and is best promoted through the freedom offered by participation in the free market (Tkacz 2014, 18). Following Hayek, Popper argues that any form of centralised planning is detrimental because it presupposes that the state knows what is best for its citizens, which can only be the case for a small number of citizens, rather than society as a whole, as individuals are the best determinants of what is best for themselves. As such, the open society is one that ensures and preserves individual freedom of choice within society. Tkacz summarises Popper’s approach: ‘Openness is necessary because nobody can know for certain what the best course for society might be from the outset, and at the same time it is assumed that openness provides the best possible conditions for producing knowledge and, therefore, making better decisions’ (Tkacz 2014, 18). Political openness, for Popper, is a prerequisite for maximising one’s decision-making capabilities in a society where no one person or institution knows the best course of action for all. It is a concept in alignment with individual freedom and sovereignty.

Without going into the merits of his assessment of Popper, Tkacz makes it clear that Popper’s Open Society ‘resonates strongly’ with the neoliberal agenda – the ‘organisational philosophy of “competition”’ as Tkacz terms it – that was to manifest in the 1980s throughout the UK and USA and is now the dominant ideology in most contemporary Western democracies (Tkacz 2014, 19). In terms of openness, Tkacz argues that the development of open-source software is an

instantiation of openness in Popper's sense and is therefore a neoliberal project. From this, the author argues, it is clear to see a neoliberal streak running through contemporary 'open' movements – from open-access publishing to open educational resources to open government data.

Tkacz's argument is based on the premise that open-source software prevailed as the dominant method of development over Richard Stallman's more explicitly political 'Free Software' method. Open-source software is associated with what Eric Raymond (co-founder of the Open Source Initiative organisation) termed the 'bazaar' approach to development whereby groups of coders collaborated on individual projects in accordance with the need to 'release early and often, delegate everything you can, be open to the point of promiscuity'. Stallman's 'cathedral' approach, as Raymond describes, was highly individualised, undertaken by 'individual wizards or small bands of mages' with software not released until it was completely finalised (Raymond n.d.).

Tkacz likens the differences in the two approaches to the difference between the free market and central planning. Open-source software represented the 'new liberal utopia: radically open to competing "agendas and ideas"' (Tkacz 2014, 24). Stallman's free software philosophy, on the other hand, emphasises the ethical imperative of freedom from corporations. He describes it as a 'social movement' aimed primarily at protecting the freedom of users to use and reuse code, in opposition to the proprietary software created by big businesses. This is distinguished from open-source software more generally, which Stallman calls a 'development methodology' rather than an ideology (Stallman 2007). Open-source software is not explicitly political but embraces competing approaches and encourages connections with business.

The open-source 'bazaar' development philosophy prevailed over Stallman's Free Software. Today, the Linux operating system (often hailed as the crowning achievement of open-source software) is used by multinational corporations everywhere, including Google and Amazon, and is the basis for the Android mobile operating system. With so many for-profit companies utilising Linux, it is easy to understand why Tkacz associates open-source with the free-market approach. Open-source projects are participatory, decentralised and benefit from the 'marketplace' of competing ideas and code commits, thus avoiding the presumed tyranny of the centralised approach that assumes the sole creator(s) know the best course of action.

For Tkacz, this means there is an identifiable association between openness and neoliberalism.

If we are to accept Tkacz's account of open source as neoliberal and look closely at 'open' projects that bear its name, we would surely find that OA itself bears the same hallmarks. Certainly, many aspects of OA were influenced by open-source software, particularly the use of open access licences alongside traditional copyright. For Tkacz, open projects display varying degrees of 'transparency, collaboration, competition and participation', all of which are fostered through the use of Creative Commons CC BY licences that permit readers to freely read, share and reuse published research (for commercial purposes) without requiring permission from the copyright holder.

For many advocates, such as the signatories of the Budapest Open Access Initiative (BOAI) declaration (BOAI 2002), OA can only be achieved by CC BY. Anything less introduces a barrier to the open progress of science. Research dissemination requires as little friction as possible, it is argued, and this can only occur with minimal restrictions on the ability to reuse research. Such is the line adopted by many born-digital scientific publishers such as PLOS, BioMedCentral and F1000, all of whose articles are published under CC BY. Such publishers also developed and utilise the article-processing charge as the main generator of revenue, which requires payment from the author's funder at the time of publication. This business model has been copied by numerous other traditional commercial publishers such as Nature and Elsevier. Article-processing charges are now a dominant model for OA and many millions are spent by funders and universities on them each year (e.g., Lawson 2015). OA has been opened up to competition within the free market, despite one of the primary motivators for OA being an objection to the profiteering practices of commercial publishers (as I will explore further in this chapter). Further still, in favouring CC BY over other more restrictive licenses, published articles are open for reuse by commercial entities. There is therefore an association between certain articulations of OA and the free market (and neoliberalism more generally) in the way Tkacz describes.

When understood through the history of open source software, then, it is clear that *some* understandings of openness promote a neoliberal vision along the lines described above. In many respects, openness is pragmatic, business-friendly, competitive and non-centralised; it has been easily embraced and subsumed by

capitalism in the same way as many instances of open-source software have. However, just because openness (and OA specifically) can be neoliberalised, it would be an overgeneralisation to assert that *all* instances of open projects derive from the intellectual project of neoliberalism. How, then, should we theorise openness?

Reclaiming the open

The problem with generalising out from the politics of some projects that operate under the banner of ‘open’ to all of them is that it treats the political in general as a category that has already been decided upon, rather than a decision made, as Chantal Mouffe illustrates (following Derrida), in an ‘undecidable terrain’ (Mouffe 2013, 17). ‘Neoliberal’ is not therefore a political category that can be indiscriminately applied to all forms of openness but something operating in a specific context and under certain conditions (or ‘closures’). Tkacz himself recognises this, stating: ‘Rather than using the open to look forward, there is a pressing need to look more closely at the specific projects that operate under its name—at their details, emergent relations, consistencies, modes of organising and stabilizing, points of difference, and forms of exclusion and inclusion [...]’ (Tkacz 2014, 38). It is these ‘details, emergent relations, modes of organising and stabilizing, points of difference, and forms of exclusion and inclusion’ that contribute to a project’s politics. Closures need to be made and constantly reassessed, rather than decided upon in advance as a homogeneous category or structure.

Gary Hall makes this point about OA specifically: ‘to argue that open access is political in this explicit, a priori way, would be to give the impression that it is so simply because it conforms to some already established and easily recognized criteria of what it is to be political’ (Hall 2008, 35–36). Certainly, examples of openness (and open access) do conform to the rhetoric of the market and competitive, individualised approaches to scholarship. But other examples of openness may be more progressive, seeking instead to organise in a way that tackles a specific problem in a given context. The status of openness as ‘political’ in any form (be it progressive or reactionary) is not something that can be decided upon in advance and applicable in all circumstances.

It is difficult, then, to speak of openness as a thing-in-itself without modifying or enclosing it in some way. Openness, in a scholarly communication context, broadly refers to the gifting of the outputs of one's creative or intellectual endeavours in accordance with certain conditions. It is the choices made around how this is done, what closures are made and how projects are organised that make up their politics. For example, Dymitri Kleiner's *peer-production licence* is a form of open licence that aims to foster the creation of a commons so that 'independent communities of peers can be materially sustained and can resist the encroachments of capitalism' (Kleiner 2010, 12). To achieve this, Kleiner modified the Creative Commons Sharealike (CC BY-SA) licence to prohibit the reuse of works by for-profit corporations. For-profits are able to reuse licensed works but only after paying a fee to their creators. This encourages a different kind of open culture, based on sharing via a copyleft clause (that the author terms 'copyfarleft'), but one which confronts what Kleiner sees as an 'unfree society that requires consumer goods to capture profits' (Kleiner 2010, 28).

Kleiner's peer-production licence represents an attempt to use free culture to promote a specific kind of emancipatory politics. This involves a kind of antagonism or closure, i.e., an active choice as to the way things should be in a particular context. Antagonisms are the foundation of the political sphere; they represent disagreements or conflicts over the best course of action in a given terrain. The peer-production licence entails a specific kind of closure, one that aims to prioritise worker-owned approaches over shareholder-based capitalism. In fact, all forms of openness imply closures: from copyleft clauses in open-source licences that force re-users to licence their works under the same conditions, to the legal requirement to attribute the creator of a CC BY-licensed work, to social norms around the use of public domain materials. These are all forms of antagonism around openness.

But antagonism implies a hegemonic struggle composed of conflicting power relations between groups with different points of view. Hegemony itself presupposes what Laclau and Mouffe describe as 'the incomplete and open character of the social' (Laclau and Mouffe 2001, 134). Democracy is framed as a process of constant reinvention, but with a pluralistic, open character. Whereas the neoliberal response to openness is to enshrine it within the instruments of market-based measurement and logic, Mouffe argues on the contrary that conflict and plurality actually constitute the very possibility of democracy – 'If there is politics in society

it is because there is conflict' (Carpentier, Cammaerts, and Mouffe 2006). Democracy therefore requires institutions that promote plurality and difference. Contrary to Tkacz, then, we can see alternative forms of openness that owe very little to the neoliberal philosophy.

For Adema and Hall, the development of democracy as a process has interesting parallels to the potential development of OA. They argue it is helpful to think of OA 'less as a project and model to be implemented, and more as a process of continuous struggle and critical resistance[.]' (Adema and Hall 2013). Openness (and OA specifically) therefore implies a plurality of approaches and values; these values are temporarily constructed, constantly changing and cannot be fixed in advance. Openness is not neoliberal, then, but is itself open to deployment in a range of contexts. Much like the political presupposes an 'incomplete and open nature' so too does openness itself.

This is why one sees a diverse range of projects operating under the 'open' banner, not just those adopting a political approach one way or the other. It is also why one sees a number of projects discursively constructed in opposition to neoliberal approaches within publishing that emanate instead from a commitment to 'collective action', 'social justice' or 'resisting the commercialisation of publishing'. Yet, because the political is never something can be defined in advance, it is important to note that a project defining itself 'in opposition' to neoliberalism does not represent the final say on the matter either. Many open projects can reflect a plurality of positions at the same time, irrespective of their self-defined 'political' commitments. But with so many diverse approaches espousing a philosophy of openness, surely 'the open' has a more complicated relationship with the political than meets the eye.

In this section I have illustrated that openness has the potential to be discursively constructed outside of the values of neoliberalism; to do so, from the perspective of deconstruction, requires careful and constant (re-)articulation in undecidable terrain of values. Although there are many 'open' projects that do more closely reflect the neoliberal values of measurement by the market, there are many that seek to oppose it. Suffice to say that this section does illustrate a lineage between open source and open access, particularly as many OA projects that evolve from open-source culture focus on the potential of reuse, collaboration. However, not all understandings of open access derive from this lineage and instead reflect

more of a preoccupation with the provision of public access to research literature. This section has revealed that the politics of openness requires responsible consideration of the closures and cuts made in releasing something to a particular community.

Open access across boundaries

It is necessary at this stage to introduce an additional theoretical layer to this exploration of OA. Having shown that openness is itself an approach or process with no fixed meaning or definition, I argue that it is helpful to theorise OA itself as a boundary object. A term first defined by Star and Griesemer in 1989, boundary objects are concepts or physical objects that are understood differently within individual communities but maintain enough structure so as to be understood between communities also. As the authors write:

Boundary objects are objects which are both plastic enough to adapt to local needs and the constraints of the several parties employing them, yet robust enough to maintain a common identity across sites. They are weakly structured in common use, and become strongly structured in individual site use. These objects may be abstract or concrete. They have different meanings in different social worlds but their structure is common enough to more than one world to make the recognizable, a means of translation (Star and Griesemer 1989, 393).

It is the plasticity of the boundary object that is key. Boundary objects maintain a recognisable structure across communities despite being understood differently in different situations and contexts. Their structure is always open to change.

In terms of OA, if we accept that openness is a concept describing multiple approaches, and we also accept that OA itself has a number of individual motivations and understandings (as I show further in the next section), then it is best conceptualised as a boundary object. This means that OA resonates differently within individual communities of practice, not just within disciplinary communities but cross-disciplinary interest groups or those sharing a common methodology (or

any community of practice, for that matter). It also allows OA advocates to share a common language despite not having a common vision or explicit shared understanding of what they are advocating.

However, arguments over the correct definition of OA and strategies for how it should be pursued are rife within the OA movement. Boundary objects, as Isto Huvila explains, do not escape the kinds of hegemonic struggles between perspectives over how an object should be conceived. Boundary object creation is not purely consensual and still relies on the need to make decisions or closures as to what the object represents. As Huvila argues: ‘the creation or reshaping of boundary objects is always an attempt to make an hegemonic intervention’ (Huvila 2011, 2536). These kinds of hegemonic interventions are common throughout open access, especially around routes to open access, how it should be funded, what licenses are required and whether top-down policies are needed. Boundary objects therefore are fluid enough to cope with a variety of closures but rigid enough such that disagreements over definitional closures may also arise between (and within) communities of practice.

For Janneke Adema, the fluidity of the concept of OA is akin to what Ernesto Laclau terms a ‘floating signifier’, a concept ‘without a fixed meaning and one that is easily adopted by different political ideologies’ (Adema 2015, 147). This is because its meaning is continually ‘suspended’ (Laclau 2005, 133). Floating signifiers are an equally helpful way to think about individual instances of openness, as potentially representing a range of values and ideologies, and subject to a variety of hegemonic interventions from dominant groups. It is, for Adema, this lack of fixity that gives OA ‘its power’ and allows experimentation in a range of contexts (Adema 2015, 147). However, the understanding of OA as a floating signifier only tells half the story and fails to adequately account for how it is recognisable across different communities of practice despite having different meanings within them. Conceptualising OA as a boundary object is therefore useful for moving beyond the idea that it can *merely* represent a range of values, which provides a better account for why OA has been successfully adopted as a highly successful global movement. The language of ‘open access’ is readily understandable by experts and newcomers alike.

So, despite the fact that OA implies an array of closures, values and politics, it is still recognisable enough between various communities who have rallied around

it and created a highly successful movement. Despite the movement's heterogeneity, it has been able to influence the entire structure of academic journal publishing and has impacted the policy agendas of governments around the world. This may be because of OA's association with social justice and an open, participatory public sphere, or it may be because of its association with transparency, the free market and efficiency of the scientific process. OA proves relatively rigid as a concept even when motivated by differing or even apparently oppositional factors. Yet, as this next section shows, there are other motivations for open access that stem primarily from the promotion of *free access to research*, as opposed to being primarily concerned with openness and reuse. From analysing the lineage of OA that emphasises research access, it will become clear that the different approaches and motivations for OA reveal its singular, community-specific nature (as a 'floating signifier'). This will illustrate that it is not possible to talk about OA as one thing, or even a thing-in-itself at all, but a series of experiments of critical engagement with publishing processes, free culture and scholarly communications in general.

Access to research

Conceiving OA as a boundary object means it is understood differently in different settings. Aside from OA's lineage from open-source culture, and 'openness' more broadly, this section focuses on the parallel development of OA as derived from the desire to provide access to research to those without it. Forms of OA that promote research access do not necessarily require any separate approach to copyright or relaxed reuse permissions, the kinds of which are embedded in understandings of OA that derive more from open-source software and free culture. The forms of OA that prioritise access are often more conservative in their approach to research articles and books, treating them as fixed objects, rather than open to adaptation and remixing. The emphasis tends to be on simply removing price restrictions to research works rather than encouraging new ways of conceiving academic research through free culture.

Repository access

OA that prioritises access is often, though not exclusively, associated with repositories. An early example of repository access on the Web was the arXiv. Originally for high-energy physics research, this repository formalised the pre-existing culture in physics of sharing working papers (preprints) as soon as they were ready, prior to peer review and publication in a journal. High-energy physics always had a culture of sharing working papers – this was originally conducted via post and then by email to an exclusive list of ‘a-list’ researchers (Ginsparg 2011, 3). The arXiv ensured that anyone with access to the internet could read cutting-edge physics research. However, as arXiv founder Paul Ginsparg notes, the internet was ‘something of a private playground for academics, subject to few intrusions from the outside world’ and so editorial and access controls were not necessary. This presupposes that if the ‘outside world’ were more present on the early Web then the arXiv might not have been freely accessible to all. It seems likely then, despite its importance and success as a repository of publicly accessible physics and mathematics research, that its facilitation of access to knowledge was a mere by-product of the arXiv’s original intentions. Rather, the arXiv increased the speed of dissemination of high-energy physics research to those whose access was delayed because they were not on the ‘a-list’ in the days before the Web.

The arXiv is an example of an approach to OA that made pre-existing research dissemination practices more efficient by working within the constraints and affordances of the high-energy physics epistemic culture. It is unlikely that the publicly accessibility of works on the arXiv was relevant or even noticeable to early users of the repository, if only because there were initially so few users on the Web. Its success was down to how it improved the existing research practices of high-energy physics researchers by democratising research access. The arXiv also highlights the contingency of open access in high-energy physics. It was not adopted out of a political commitment, a need to reach a broader public or a desire to reduce subscription costs. In fact, physicists still continue to publish in traditional journals today for ‘prestige and reward allocation’, contributing to the editorial labour for a parallel system of traditional, peer-reviewed journal publications (Kling and McKim 2000; Delfanti 2016).

Alongside the development of the arXiv, similar arguments were made by advocates of using digital technologies to distribute scholarly material. Only this was aimed at using the web to push back on price barriers to research access. Stevan Harnad's 'Subversive Proposal' is a notable example:

For centuries, it was only out of reluctant necessity that authors of esoteric publications made the Faustian bargain to allow a price-tag to be erected as a barrier between their work and its (tiny) intended readership because that was the only way to make their work public in the era when paper publication (and its substantial real expenses) were the only way to do so. But today there is another way, and that is PUBLIC FTP. (Harnad 1995, 11)

Harnad's understanding of scholarship as 'esoteric' is noteworthy here, which he describes as 'non-trade, no-market'. Because academic authors do not sell their work for money, and because academic work has a 'tiny' intended audience, as Harnad claims, it was considered more efficient to distribute pre-prints via FTP (in addition to the fledgling Web and its commercial rival Gopher). Harnad was instrumental in the institutional repository movement, which provides access to research papers via university-hosted repositories.

Implicit in both the arXiv and institutional repositories is the idea that research objects can be shared more effectively via digital technologies. This is the kind of access emphasised by John Willinsky's 'access principle': A commitment to the value and quality of research carries with it a responsibility to extend the circulation of such work as far as possible and ideally to all who are interested in it and all who might profit by it (Willinsky 2006, xii). The access principle describes a researcher's 'responsibility' to disseminate their research to all who wish to read it. This is an often-cited argument for OA: digital technologies enable a more effective way of sharing research such that everyone with a stable internet connection should be able to access it. It is a claim based on technology as an enabler of research sharing through efficient dissemination.

Arguments of this kind are often framed as a response to prohibitively high journal subscriptions, especially the 'serials crisis' that affects academic libraries, referring to the increase in the price of journals above inflation such that increasingly few libraries can afford all the resources they need (University of Illinois Library at

Urbana-Champaign 2009). From this perspective, OA is seen as a specific response to the broader problem of publisher pricing strategies and the perpetuation of a business model based on print rather than digital economics. OA, the argument goes, should therefore ease library budgets and have a positive effect both inside and outside the university. One of the more notable campaigns for OA is predicated upon the notion that journal prices are exorbitantly expensive, without explicitly mentioning CC BY, reuse or even the term 'open access'. The 'Cost of Knowledge' website maintains a list of signatories of researchers who are boycotting Elsevier, the publisher frequently cited as one of the worst proponents of profiteering from journal subscriptions. The website specifically objects to 'exorbitantly high prices for subscriptions' and Elsevier's support of policies that 'aim to restrict the free exchange of information' (Cost of Knowledge 2011). The boycott currently lists over 16,000 signatories by people committing to not to submit to, referee for, or edit an Elsevier journal.

Though the motivations for research access are numerous, arguments in their favour do not rely on the need for research to be open for reuse (sometimes termed *libre* open access) but instead simply require that research objects are made publicly available. Repositories do not generally carry the requirement for articles to be uploaded under particular Creative Commons licenses. They are therefore associated more with *gratis* access (free to access rather than free to reuse) simply because this is perceived as sufficient to solve the original problem framed as a lack of access to research outputs. But there is a tension here between *gratis* access to research and what many hold up as the canonical definition of OA: the Budapest Open Access Initiative definition, a minimum criterion of which is that OA should entail the ability to reuse a research paper. The only restriction should be to 'give authors control over the integrity of their work and the right to be properly acknowledged and cited' (BOAI 2002). Repositories in general do not provide the kind of OA that conforms to this definition.

The journalist Richard Poynder makes a similar point on the tension between *gratis* and *libre* access:

[T]here is a contradiction at the heart of the OA movement – namely that while BOAI proposed self-archiving as one of the ways of achieving its objectives, green OA cannot actually meet BOAI's own definition of open

access, not least because most self-archived papers will have been published in a subscription journal, and publishers will never allow papers from which they expect to earn subscriptions to be made freely available on the Web (or at least not before a lengthy embargo), and certainly not in the way BOAI called for – i.e. with reuse permitted. (Poynder 2017, 4).

This is indeed a contradiction. Such contradictions are reflective of hegemonic and counter-hegemonic interventions through which one group attempts to impose order over another. This is complicated by the fact that academic publishing is subject to a number of unequal power relations and entrenched financial interests. Certain approaches to OA will always be met with resistance if they seek to curtail the power of large, corporate publishers or impose the publishing norms of scientific disciplines on the humanities, for example. Much of the OA movement is therefore less about what ‘open access’ is and more about who controls scholarly publishing. Returning control of publishing was an identifiable, if not always explicit, motivation of many of the scholar-led OA journals that launched on the early web.

Early scholar-led journals

The early 1990s saw a surge of academic-led journals launched on LISTSERVs and the fledgling World Wide Web. Many of these journals were in the humanities, such as *Postmodern Culture*, *Bryn Mawr Classical Review* and *CTheory*, using newly popularised digital technologies to publish work without the need for traditional presses. Despite not using the term ‘open access’, which was not associated with academic publishing until the late-90s, many early journals stated a commitment to public accessibility of academic research. For example, in 1991 the editors of *Postmodern Culture* wrote that for ‘a publication in electronic media to succeed in serving even the most traditional purposes, such publication obviously needs to be available to the public--to students, to researchers, and to interested readers’ (Amiran and Unsworth 1991, unpaginated). There was therefore an early realization from humanities researchers that both the internet and the Web could be utilised to extend the readership of scholarly journals to the broader public.

Many early digital journals were managed and maintained entirely by their academic editors. In 1992, Ann Okerson described the new ecosystem of scholar-led

journals as ‘recovering ownership and distribution of their own creations’ (Okerson 1992, 170), fitting with the narrative of the net and early Web as libertarian playgrounds for experimentation in a range participatory cultures. Okerson notes that these journals distinguished themselves from traditional publishing in a number of ways: the editors were usually the publishers, they were primarily in the humanities and social sciences, and journals were maintained on a tiny (or non-existent) budget in their editors’ spare time – ‘by the light of the moon’ (Okerson 1992, 172–73). Such journals were unconnected to traditional university presses who, Okerson claims, were ‘probably unaware of their existence’ (ibid, 173).

For the editors of *Postmodern Culture*, reclaiming control of publishing allowed academics to question the ‘common sense’ of what constitutes a finished work, encouraging ‘works in progress, collaborative essays, and interviews’ and other forms of experimental scholarly writing (Amiran and Unsworth 1991, unpaginated). It is noteworthy that many of these early journals published research from the theoretical and critical disciplines most associated with progressive politics and questioning traditional power structures in society. Researcher ownership of scholarly journals was framed as a way of not just taking back control of publishing, but of also *thinking through* the publishing process and experimenting with what it means to publish in the early digital age. As Kathy Acker writes in the inaugural issue of *Postmodern Culture*: ‘To copy down, to appropriate, to deconstruct other texts is to break down those perceptual habits the culture doesn’t want to be broken. Deconstruction demands not so much plagiarism as breaking into copyright law’ (Acker 1990).

We might conceive of the early scholar-led journals as *recursive publics*, Christopher Kelty’s terminology for describing digital participatory cultures, such as free software communities, that are ‘vitally concerned with the material and practical maintenance and modification of the technical, legal, practical, and conceptual means of [their] own existence as a public’ (Kelty 2008, 3). Early scholar-led journals were informal, self-sustaining and independent from traditional publishing networks, all predicated on public access via the Web (and many of them still exist today). For Kelty, recursive publics have the potential to both critique and speak to existing forms of power through ‘the production of actually existing alternatives’ to the dominant order (ibid). They therefore point to the early possibilities of different modes of organization enabled by digital technologies.

In terms of the different histories of OA, it is important to bear in mind that early experiments in scholar-led publishing arose out of humanities communities, particularly those from the more critical elements of the humanities, and not just the sciences (as is routinely thought). They were motivated by the desire to explore new ways of publishing through different forms of ownership and organization, all predicated on a commitment to public access to research. Yet this section has only scratched the surface of the various ways in which OA resonates differently within those communities committed to public research access. Suffice to say, public research access is a distinct lineage in the history of OA, as opposed to understandings of OA that foreground ‘openness’ as their chief concern. This has important implications for the concept of OA and helps explain a number of features with the current ecosystem that impact directly on the humanities.

As OA increased in popularity over the decades following the birth of the Web, much of it was based on providing access to research via books, journals and repositories without consideration for sharing research using alternatives to copyright or intellectual property based on open licensing. This meant that there is a parallel strand of OA that is entirely separate from the BOAI definition of CC BY-based research. Particularly in monograph publishing, there were a number of initiatives aimed at making books freely available to the public. In Australia, for example, a number of university presses have published many hundreds of OA monographs under traditional copyright with no libre licensing, largely in response to an Australian Research Council mandate that simply requires books to be made freely available (Steele 2013). Similarly, repositories such as the arXiv and RePEc provide access to thousands of preprints (or ‘working papers’ in economics) with the primary intention of communicating research papers directly to fellow academics, despite the fact that both repositories are publicly accessible. The existence of alternatives to libre OA is no small issue; there is undoubtedly more OA research published in the web without open access licenses than with them. Yet, as Poynder shows above, the BOAI definition of open access is frequently positioned as central to the OA movement, despite a plurality of forms of OA on display that may overlap but are not entirely consensual or in agreement.

I therefore understand OA in much the same way as Adema and Hall as an ‘ongoing critical struggle, or series of struggles’ rather than a project to be implemented or a solution to one particular problem (Adema and Hall 2013, 35).

Many different actors make their research freely available for a variety of reasons, and under different conditions, and I want to avoid homogenising something that has hitherto been so heterogeneous. In thinking of OA as a series of struggles, Adema and Hall hope to ‘create more space for radically different, conflicting, even incommensurable positions within the larger movement’ (ibid). Conflict in the OA movement must be accounted for rather than discouraged, in much the same way Laclau and Mouffe argue that conflict provides the very possibility for politics rather than works against it. Only then will a plurality of approaches be explored and a diversity of voices be heard.

Conclusion

This chapter has shown that the term open access has a complex lineage that cannot be portrayed as representing a coherent or homogeneous ‘movement’ even if it is treated as such. Not only are there two separate lineages of OA originating from *openness* on the one hand and *access to research* on the other, even within these lineages there are numerous motivations and understandings of the term. From Nathaniel Tkacz’s analysis of openness we have seen that forms of OA may be indeed contain a neoliberal tendency in the same way that many forms of open-source software may do. Yet, I have also shown that OA is not necessarily a neoliberal project either and can encompass a variety of political, social and disciplinary motivations that cannot be reduced to one particular understanding. Early experiments in open access were motivated by a variety of factors, from reclaiming control of scholarly communication, to formalising pre-existing preprint cultures, to public access to academic research, or to connecting research with movements for social justice. These motivations have only become more disparate and numerous as OA has grown in scale and complexity.

Such diverse motivations mean that OA cannot be painted with a broad brush as a single movement or project that a group of advocates are trying to implement. Some voices shout louder than others, and others are better at influencing policy, but this should not be confused with, as many claim, a homogeneous community of zealous advocates all pulling in the same direction (Golumbia 2016; Beall 2013). Similarly, OA is not best conceived, as Daniel Allington characterises the advocate position, as a ‘single purported solution’ to one or many problem (Allington 2013,

unpaginated). OA represents a number of approaches and motivations, some thought through better than others, and it is easy for critics to portray a particular approach to OA as representative of all approaches to it.

We can theorise the two discrete lineages of openness and access to research, each with its own range of motivations, understandings and resonances. The histories of OA reveals its meaning is multiple, it is highly community-specific and not necessarily politically progressive or reactionary, but dependent on the choices taken by those responsible for particular instance of OA. These choices are temporary, pragmatic and always entail cuts taken in an undecidable terrain.

It is clear that the conditions for OA's existence arises out of the two lineages between open source/free culture and access to research. Martin Eve makes a similar point, arguing that OA emerges at the 'convergence point of these two narratives – problems of supply-/demand-side economics and the birth of the free culture movement' (Eve 2014b, 21). This is certainly a good way of framing the conditions for the possibility of OA, although one would not want to emphasise too much of a consensus between the two lineages. John Willinsky, for example, goes as far as to say that there is a 'common cause' that unites open source, open access and open science, and that the convergence of circumstances is in fact a convergence of intentions (Willinsky 2005, unpaginated). However, my analysis illustrates that this is not the case. To speak of a 'common cause' is to assume a fixed solution to a specific problem, but we have already seen that OA is neither of these things. Theorising OA as a boundary object allows us to think of it as a community-led process without fixed meaning and continually open to interpretation. Such an understanding of OA will allow a number of individual experiments in openness to blossom, thus working against closure by any particular group. It is the diversity of approaches makes open access useful.

But despite their potential for a diversity of understandings, boundary objects are subjected to the kinds of hegemonic interventions by groups seeking to enclose them in accordance with one particular meaning. This might be from policymakers trying to mandate a particular form of OA at the expense of others, or from commercial publishers looking to define OA in a way that maximises their profits, or even from the more dominant scientific disciplines who may use their superior funding capabilities to encourage a certain understanding of OA. The creation and maintenance of boundary objects is not entirely consensual but affords varying

degrees of stable agreement between different groups. But this stability is temporary, pragmatic and continually a site of struggle between different communities of practice.

This chapter has therefore shown that the concept of OA itself lacks any ethico-political content: simply making one's research freely available does not itself entail any particular ethical commitment. This means that in order to understand the values of OA in the humanities, and its potential for disrupting the existing neoliberal hegemony of humanities publishing and higher education, it is necessary to undertake further work to delve into the various approaches and experiments to understand how they articulate and practice OA in different ways. Using the framework developed here, along with the account of humanities publishing in the previous chapter, the following three chapters explore and contrast policy-based and scholar-led forms of OA in the humanities.

Chapter 3. Governmental open access policies in the UK: intentions and implementation

Over time, people (often administrators or regulatory agencies) try to control the tacking back-and-forth, and especially, to standardize and make equivalent the ill-structured and well-structured aspects of the particular boundary object. (Star 2010, 614).

Introduction

Policymaking is a delicate process. Interventions into complex areas by governments and regulatory bodies are often met with resistance from those affected, especially when numerous stakeholders are involved, and it is rarely possible to please everyone. This is because policies are often made in areas of contention or fields in which agencies feel the need to bring about a particular state of affairs. Policymaking in the UK is currently ordered by the dominant neoliberal ideology that measures the value of governmental interventions by the extent that they conform to the logic of market-based measurement, or what I will theorise as a *logic of choice*, following Annemarie Mol (2008). Though many actors attempt to influence the process, policymaking will in varying degrees result in winners and losers of those affected. It is therefore a practice fraught with the potential to both alienate and favour different groups of actors.

OA is one such issue that is affected by the policymaking processes of agencies around the world. Many funders, governments and universities are seeking to ensure that the research they fund is freely available to the broader public, in accordance with a variety of different justifications, motivations and approaches. As such, these different policies may impact upon or conflict with one another, often in unforeseen ways, resulting in a complex policy landscape with a range of different expectations and requirements that researchers must meet.

The UK government's OA policy framework is representative of this level of complexity. The framework as discussed here comprises two policies from governmental funders: Research Councils UK (RCUK) and the Higher Education Funding Councils of the UK (commonly referred to as HEFCE⁴). Each policy is based on a different approach to OA. The RCUK policy is rooted in the philosophy behind 'gold' open access, providing funding for authors to publish immediately in OA journals with the requirement that authors release their work under the liberal Creative Commons Attribution licence (CC BY), unless this is not possible (RCUK 2012b).

The HEFCE policy, on the other hand, is representative of repository-based 'green' OA (HEFCE 2014c). In order to be eligible for the Research Excellence Framework (the REF), the policy requires authors to deposit accepted journal articles into an institutional or subject repository within three months of acceptance in a journal. Authors are required to respect any embargos in place at a journal up to a maximum of two years for humanities and social science research. Journals with longer embargos than two years are considered ineligible and non-compliant for the REF (though exceptions are permitted). The policy does not mandate Creative Commons licensing in any form (though does not restrict them either). Neither policy applies to monographs or books chapters, despite their importance to the humanities and social sciences.

The HEFCE policy relies on the repository infrastructures already in place within the vast majority of UK universities. It is designed to work with pre-existing publishing cultures to maximise free accessibility of research articles with minimal input from publishers themselves, by shifting responsibility for OA to researchers and their institutions. This creates an ecosystem of freely accessible research that operates in parallel to the traditional subscription system, rather than seeking to confront or change it.

Unlike the HEFCE policy, the RCUK policy seeks to stimulate a new market for journal-based OA, primarily via article-processing charges (APCs). RCUK provide a block grant of funding to each university, proportionate to the amount of RCUK funding it receives, so as to facilitate the payment of APCs and other

⁴ In 2018 HEFCE and RCUK merged to form UK Research and Innovation (UKRI). I refer to them as HEFCE and RCUK throughout, although technically these terms are now obsolete.

expenses incurred by their OA requirements. The policy therefore encourages the creation of a market for journal-based OA through APCs. However, humanities disciplines receive significantly fewer RCUK grants than other disciplines, and less funding in general, and so they are largely excluded from APC-based OA (Eve 2014a, 1). The message from the two policies combined is that OA for the humanities is achievable on a large scale via repositories rather than journals themselves, which is what the HEFCE policy seeks to achieve.

There are clear and significant differences between the two policies, both in how they practically impact on humanities disciplines and also the tacit message they send to humanities researchers regarding OA. This is especially true given the exclusion of monographs from either policy (although HEFCE have signalled their intention to include an OA policy for monographs in the future). While the two policies are not practically incompatible, they each offer different visions of an open access future, including who is allowed to participate and under what conditions. Due to their influence and reach in the UK higher education landscape, the OA policies are a key site for exploration into the values of government-mandated forms of OA.

By exploring how the policies were constructed, framed and implemented, this chapter argues that the UK policy framework promotes a particular vision and culture that would have a detrimental impact on OA's radical possibilities. I illustrate how policies treat OA as a totalising project rather than a fluid concept that is subject to disagreements and hegemonic interventions between different communities. This is primarily because of the number of actors each funding body is required to consider, which makes policymaking an exercise in pragmatism and stakeholder management. This chapter therefore considers the shortcomings of mandating OA, rather than encouraging it through alternative grassroots and community-governed approaches.

The analysis presented is of interview data and publicly available responses to consultations on the policies by publishers and learned societies. The first section presents analysis of an interview with Ben Johnson who at the time was higher education policy advisor at HEFCE. This interview was conducted to explore HEFCE's policymaking process, their understandings of OA and how they negotiated the various actors affected by their policies. This is supplemented in the second section by analysis of interview data with the actors responsible for OA

policy implementation at a Russell Group university and a research-intensive university from (the now disbanded body) the ‘1994 Group’ of universities.

Note on methodology

I continue with a constructivist approach employing both actor-network and boundary object theories to illustrate how the actors involved with policy creation mandate a particular kind of OA and how those responsible for its implementation view the practical implications of the policy. Policymaking has the potential to challenge the mutability of OA as a boundary object, rendering it static and locked down in accordance with a particular definition or hegemonic understanding. As Star shows in the epigram above, regulatory agencies try to control and ‘make equivalent the ill-structured and well-structured aspects of the boundary object’ in a way that loses its nuance within particular communities (Star 2010). For many advocates, this situation is a price worth paying for more openly accessible research. For others, especially in humanities disciplines, the implementation of OA requires sensitivity to communities with less funding or power of influence.

I am especially interested in showing what happens to the concept of OA when it becomes standardised in a way that the funding agencies deem acceptable to all stakeholders, and how these actors in the network are ‘locked’ in place as part of this standardisation using the strategy of what Michael Callon terms *interessement* (Callon 1984). Another important methodological concept is that of the rationale behind the policies themselves – what Annemarie Mol terms its *logic* (Mol 2008, 8). A logic invites us to consider ‘what is appropriate or logical to do in some site or situation, and what is not’ (ibid). There are constraints on what policymakers are able to do with their tools at hand and illustrating the logic for their decisions will help understand the policy’s possible effects.

In presenting interview data at both governmental and university levels, I strive to ‘localise the global’, as Latour terms it (2005, 173), tracing a line from the policies set by RCUK and HEFCE down to the local, institutional level. This offers two unique perspectives of the same phenomenon and a passage to connect the policymaking site to its implementation. Actor-network theory is useful here to understand how policy directives are translated by the various actors that implement them. University staff and researchers are not passive intermediaries between the

policies and researchers: they are mediators that ‘transform, translate, distort and modify the meaning or the elements they are supposed to carry’ (Latour 2005, 39). The UK university sector is also situated in a neoliberal context that influences how the policies are translated, particularly in relation to labour issues and governance of repository infrastructures. Analysing the interviews with university staff in light of this will therefore reveal the ways in which the policies mutate from their original intention by the various actors and contexts that shape their implementation.

Out of the two governmental policies, the HEFCE policy is most applicable to humanities researchers. Although there are interesting implications of the RCUK policies for humanities disciplines, I decided not to approach anyone for an interview at RCUK because the HEFCE policy affects the average humanities researcher so much more than the RCUK policy does. While RCUK does fund large grants to a small number of humanities researchers (through the AHRC), this is a small percentage of the humanities research being conducted in the UK. For example, the 2015-16 budget allocation to the AHRC was £98.3 million out of the total £2665.5 million budget and in 2015 the AHRC funded just 251 grants under its ‘research’ programme (AHRC 2015; Department for Business, Innovation and Skills 2014). Consequently, the HEFCE policy is the primary focus of the analysis and discussion and the RCUK policy will be referred to as part of the broader policy context.

Data collection

Data was collected using semi-structured interviews and full ethical consent was obtained from all participants. Participants in the university were purposefully selected due to their responsibility for implementing OA policy, while Ben Johnson was interviewed because of his role in drafting the policy. Explicit permission was obtained to identify Ben Johnson of HEFCE as the interviewee and make the transcript fully available online on the Zenodo repository (B. Johnson 2016), while the university staff data is presented anonymised, including the names of each university. For reference, page numbers are provided for quotations from the interview with Ben Johnson. The interviews took place in January and February 2016, shortly before the HEFCE policy took effect throughout UK universities in April 2016.

The interview with Ben Johnson was conducted in order to understand the values associated with HEFCE's approach, including why its policy differs from that of RCUK and how external stakeholders influenced the outcome of the process. This was achieved by questioning Johnson on the decisions made in creating the policy, including how the various stakeholders were negotiated in the process. Though the questioning was semi-structured and conversational, Johnson is a spokesperson for a political agency and this required some of his statements to be challenged and clarified in the context of the politics surrounding OA. Consequently, sections of the interview represent more of a debate rather than a traditional semi-structured interview.

This is in contrast to the interviews with university staff that were qualitative information-seeking exercises, though still conversational and free-flowing. Six semi-structured interviews were conducted in total: two with university librarians responsible for OA implementation, two with research administrators (non-academic) and two with academic directors of research (working academics with responsibilities for advising on and monitoring university research requirements). Participants were asked to describe their institution's response to the policies, their feelings on the potential for the implications of the policies and how this relates to OA more generally. The analysis of both sets of interviews attempts to connect each other to explore the relationship between HEFCE's discourse, how it is received and translated by the university staff and how it is ultimately implemented throughout each university.

Data was transcribed, coded and analysed using the constructivist grounded theory of qualitative data analysis. Understood by Glaser and Strauss as 'the discovery of theory from data', grounded theory requires close attention to the material in order to generate conceptual categories about the evidence from comparative analysis (Glaser and Strauss 2009, 1). It is not, however, a prescriptive methodology but a flexible approach to letting the data 'lead the way'. Yet unlike how grounded theory was originally conceived, my approach eschews the possibility of value-free research analysis, as I am tightly entangled with my site of analysis (see introductory chapter). To this extent, I am adopting a critical form of grounded theory, sometimes simply called 'critical grounded theory' (Hense and McFerran 2016) or 'critical inquiry' (Charmaz 2017), which foregrounds power structures as the objects of analysis, rather than assumes it is simply one matter of concern among

many. I am therefore engaged in creating theory through my own embeddedness with the data generated, rather than engaging in traditional empirical research.

HEFCE's Policymaking Process

It is worth beginning by looking at the HEFCE policymaking process and why it differs from the RCUK policy. HEFCE and RCUK fund research in different ways. RCUK awards are based on assessing the quality of research proposals, while HEFCE assesses the quality of research that has already been conducted (so-called quality-related or 'QR' funding). As such, the policies affect different communities in different ways. Because RCUK funds prospective research, it is able to allocate funding to specific projects in accordance with certain conditions on how research should be disseminated. Funding can also be allocated by universities to pay for article-processing charges as part of each award. On the other hand, the Research Excellence Framework (HEFCE's funding exercise) awards funding to academic departments to pay for salaries. HEFCE has less of a direct influence over how QR funding is spent and, as Johnson notes, 'there isn't additional QR to pay APCs' (B. Johnson 2016, 2).

Despite the differences between the two policies, the government's original policy directive on OA came as a response to the same document, Dame Janet Finch's report: 'Accessibility, sustainability, excellence: how to expand access to research publications' (the 'Finch Report', 2012). The primary recommendation of the Finch Report was for the government to 'make a clear commitment to support the costs of an innovative and sustainable research communications system, with a clear preference for publication in *open access or hybrid journals*' (Finch 2012, 8, my emphasis). The RCUK policy reflects this preference for publication in OA or hybrid journals (comprising a mixture of subscription and OA content), though the HEFCE policy does not.

The differences between the two policies, Johnson argues, is reflective of HEFCE's consultations with researchers, particularly in humanities disciplines:

We always felt instinctively that there needed to be a greater focus on what was driving the politics of how OA was being interpreted and implemented in humanities disciplines. The vast majority of those we were hearing from in these

disciplines, including learned societies in those disciplines, were vastly favouring a green open access route and not to follow the gold open access policies. (B. Johnson 2016, 2)

HEFCE consulted twice on the policy, firstly an ‘informal consultation’ on the possibility of open access for the post-2014 REF and secondly, in response to the first consultation, a second consultation on the resulting policy proposal (ibid). These consultations provided an opportunity for interested parties to voice their opinions on the policy formation. Responses were received from individual researchers, learned societies, publishers, institutions and charities, many of which reflecting a humanities perspective.

For instance, the British Philosophical Association responded to the HEFCE consultation by calling gold open access ‘disastrous for publishing in philosophy and in other humanities subjects’ saying it ‘threatens academic freedom’ (British Philosophical Association 2013, no pagination); while the Royal Historical Society echoed this sentiment, favouring the green route with longer embargoes and no mandated Creative Commons licensing (Royal Historical Society 2013, 1). HEFCE also benefited from the fact that their policymaking process operated more slowly than RCUK’s. Johnson describes how HEFCE were able to base their consultations on the ‘reactions’ to the RCUK policy from various stakeholders – the ‘mood music’ being played at the time (B. Johnson 2016, 2). For example, the British Academy for the Humanities & Social Sciences responded to a consultation on the RCUK policy by arguing that: ‘the publication of HSS articles will potentially be more at risk in a constrained funding environment’ (British Academy 2013, 4). The main concerns from humanities associations revolved around liberal Creative Commons licensing, a lack of article-processing charge funding for the humanities, short embargo lengths and potential restrictions on academic freedom, all of which reflect a conservative approach to OA.

Given the responses of humanities learned societies, Johnson was keen to emphasise the pragmatism that went into devising the policy. In addition to the need to consider the voices of humanities researchers, HEFCE were also aware of the significance universities place on the REF: ‘[there is] a lot of nervousness around these national assessments’ (B. Johnson 2016, 4). Universities spend a huge amount of time and money preparing their submission to the REF and any changes to its

format can be met with frustration from university staff and faculty who have to alter their processes to meet the new conditions. HEFCE felt they could not enforce a particular kind of open access that would be too onerous or expensive to comply with, nor could they mandate a form of open access that many professional humanities organisations objected to in such strong terms.

Arguably, this statement fails to appreciate the costs involved in maintaining repositories, training and monitoring compliance – it is not simply a low-cost alternative to gold OA. Although most universities already have institutional repositories, there are costs associated with the requirement that all academics deposit their research, especially with the added training and compliance monitoring that the policy entails, not least the costs of making academic staff deposit their publications. But it is pragmatic for HEFCE to utilise existing repository infrastructures for the policy, despite the increase in costs. This is because the individual costs per paper are marginal and divided across a number of different employees in the university, unlike an article-processing charge that is one, large, fixed sum paid externally.⁵

Another aspect to the pragmatic approach claimed by Johnson is the need to work within the limitations imposed by subscription publishers, many of whom favour long embargoes on research articles before they can be made publicly accessible. For example, Johnson cites that HEFCE are ‘uncomfortable’ with the policy’s accepted embargo length, but that shorter embargoes would have resulted in fewer compliant papers:

If you take those periods, 12 months in STEM and 24 months in AHSS, and you look at where people had published in the last REF, in terms of journal articles, then those rules are permissive enough to allow for almost all of those papers to have met the requirements: 96% we calculated based on a representative sample, which shows that even with those long embargoes you can get everybody doing it. If you say, we’re not going to tolerate those embargo periods, we want 6 months and we’re going to make that the maximum that’s allowed and 12-months for AHSS then you can reasonably do that but the figure falls to about 65%. This is higher than the

⁵ The labour involved in implementing the policies will be discussed in a later section of the chapter.

Research Councils aimed to get [...] but it's not quite 96%. (B. Johnson 2016, 12–13)

Rather than locking horns with publishers over embargo length, HEFCE accepted that the path of least resistance was to specify an embargo period that would allow nearly all research to be compliant with the policy. A shorter embargo period, particularly for humanities research, would result in more exceptions to the policy and consequently fewer accessible articles in repositories. This was the compromise Johnson claims HEFCE was willing to make.

This means that HEFCE is willing to feel 'uncomfortable' about some aspects of the policy if it leads to greater OA adoption, even if this form of OA is somewhat watered down to please certain powerful stakeholders. It is clear that some actors wield more influence than others – particularly those voices representing learned societies and publishers, the majority of whom favouring conservative or even anti-open access approaches – and their influence is noteworthy in the resulting policy. What appears to be pragmatism, then, may instead be HEFCE's need to appease its paymasters (the government) by adopting a policy that does not upset the status quo.

OA is therefore problematised by HEFCE as *free access to research papers in repositories*, operating under the conditions of the traditional subscription system. Framing OA in this way makes HEFCE's policy acceptable to the important stakeholders, which then gets them on board as allies. By utilising the power that the REF holds over universities, HEFCE assumes the automatic compliance of universities and their academics. HEFCE has much more influence over universities than they do over the publishing industry. There is, however, no recognition in the policy that OA is, at least in part, a response to the business practices of some of the stakeholders being consulted (Elsevier, for example), especially when these stakeholders were being used to justify some of the more restrictive aspects of the policy (such as lengthy embargos).

The resulting policy displays a need to offer the perception of a balanced approach, which means taking into account the kneejerk responses, dissensions, and those with a significant financial stake in opposing or gaining from open access. HEFCE's strategy is made more complicated by the government's commitment to

business and the healthy profits of the publishing sector. Simply, the government cannot appear to be against commercial publishers, or free market practices more broadly, even if OA itself is a response to traditional publishing practices. Or, as Johnson puts it: ‘it’s not right for HEFCE to make protestations on how the market can be configured in order to best arrive at OA’ (B. Johnson 2016, 6).

HEFCE’s strategy of *interessement*

HEFCE here operates a strategy of *interessement* in attempting to enrol other actors as allies and gain their support for the policy. *Interessement* is a term introduced by Michael Callon to describe the ways in which an actor ‘attempts to impose and stabilize the identity of the other actors it defines through its problematization’ (Callon 1984, 8). This occurs by one actor defining a problem or concept in a way that is recognisable and acceptable to all other actors in the network, particularly so that it aligns with their concerns, intentions or goals. Callon describes this as a way of stabilising the network in order to ‘lock the allies into place’ (Callon 1984, 8). *Interessement* does not necessarily lead to a full alignment of the interests of all groups but it does result in a pragmatic agreement on a particular issue.

HEFCE employs *interessement* to obtain a tacit agreement on their policy and to ‘lock’ the various stakeholders into place as allies. They do this with recourse to the two consultations in order to understand what the stakeholders deem acceptable. The consultations provide a sense of legitimacy to the policy by granting a say to everyone affected by it, such as universities, publishers, researchers and learned societies. *Interessement* therefore allows HEFCE to take the interests of each actor into account and negotiate them into a policy.

Yet the affected stakeholders have different degrees of power within the network. HEFCE’s approach needs to prioritise certain viewpoints over others. For example, publishers, and particularly learned societies connected to commercial publishers, are in a strong position of influence over HEFCE. If they argue that a government intervention will negatively impact on their business, the government is likely to listen. This is because of the administration’s commitment to a neoliberalism, which judges the efficacy of government by the extent to which it conforms to free market logic. Johnson reflects this above when he claims that it is

not right for HEFCE to make ‘protestations’ about how the market should be configured. This is the government’s dominant logic that strongly prohibits the possibility of HEFCE promoting anything other market-based outcomes.

The conservative voices of learned societies were also of use to HEFCE’s strategy. Many learned societies receive the majority of their funding from publishers, through the sale of subscriptions to society journals, and so the views of publishers and learned societies are frequently in alignment on OA. However, learned societies also represent the voices of academics who govern the society. HEFCE is able to use the consultation responses from learned societies as representative of academics more generally, despite their having a financial interest in a conservative approach to OA that protects the revenue of subscription publishers. This indicates that the interests of some stakeholders are valued more highly than others.

This imbalance of power is apparent in the policy’s approach to embargoes. It is in the publishers’ interest to seek the longest embargoes that HEFCE will allow, to prevent readers accessing their content for free from repositories and not needing a subscription to access it. HEFCE thus permitted a long embargo rather than a shorter one that would face resistance from publishers, despite the lack of evidence that shorter embargos are detrimental to publishers. This is because HEFCE needs publishers on side for their policy. *Interessement* is therefore relative to the power each stakeholder has in the network.

However, the usage of *interessement* actively works against the understanding of OA as a community-specific, flexible concept because it forces all communities to accept the same understanding of it. Star and Griesemer describe the way in which *interessement* ‘funnels’ all stakeholders through the same ‘passage point’ by forcing them all to accept the same problematisation of a concept (Star and Griesemer 1989, 390). This means that more nuanced understandings of OA have no place within the policy because it has been reduced to something that all allies can agree upon. Star and Griesemer originally introduced the concept of boundary objects as a modification of *interessement* to account for the fact that *interessement* only considers the influence of one actor over others in the network. While for Star and Griesemer this represents a conceptual drawback with Callon’s theory, the distinction between *interessement* and boundary objects is actually helpful for

illustrating how certain actors in a position of power can influence the network – and how this shapes the resulting form of OA.

HEFCE are in a position to coerce some actors into conforming to their policy (university academics, librarians, etc.), while they are less able to influence publishers and learned societies. They therefore problematise OA as something that aligns with the concerns of publishers, while claiming that they are respecting the interests of all stakeholders. This is primarily because, through the REF, HEFCE are the universities' paymasters and so universities are in a weak position to resist or change the policy. By the same token, the government are HEFCE's paymasters and so they are unable to propose a policy that would be negatively received by the publishing industry.

Ultimately, this leads to a policy in which marginalised and dissenting voices are drowned out by more powerful stakeholders, despite OA having arisen in opposition towards the practices of such stakeholders, particularly commercial publishers. HEFCE understands that if they want larger publishers on side they have to present a neutral form of OA that does not upset the status quo. This is indicative of the exclusionary power of policy-making and its ability to enclose a particular understanding of a concept in favour of the more powerful stakeholders. HEFCE's approach minimises OA's more nuanced and community-specific understandings – its flexibility as a boundary object – in favour of a perceived neutral and balanced reading that is acceptable to all stakeholders. OA loses its fluidity as a boundary object in this context because it applies to all communities the same as a totalising project rather than an indefinite, processual concept that is understood differently within different communities of practice.

Open access as a 'journey'

Despite the seeming inflexibility of HEFCE's policy for OA, the conversation with Ben Johnson does also show that HEFCE understands that OA is a concept with some degree of flexibility (a boundary object) and reflective of different approaches. Although the HEFCE policy illustrates a preference for green OA, Johnson explains that the 'government's position' overall is for 'full, libre, CC BY open access' and 'if we had all the money in the world there is no doubt that we would want to see a gold, CC BY, immediately OA environment' (B. Johnson 2016,

4). This is the vision for OA promoted by the RCUK policy. However, the more pressing intention of the HEFCE policy is, as Johnson describes, for getting ‘eyes on research papers’ where access was previously restricted. This means that ‘reuse can happen later’ (ibid). Consequently, Johnson describes the HEFCE policy as part of a ‘journey’ to the RCUK policy’s understanding of OA.

It is clear that the HEFCE policy is intended to form part of an ecosystem of government interventions all working towards the goal of immediate, CC BY-released research, the original form of OA recommended by the Finch Report (that was mandated in the RCUK policy). Yet because the REF impacts on disciplines such as the humanities that do not have regular and consistent access to grant funding to pay for APCs, HEFCE were unable to mandate this form of OA. The REF is quite a blunt instrument: it affects all researchers in UK institutions, in all disciplines, and occurs in spaced out intervals of 4+ years. Requirements have to be simple, concise and discipline-neutral. Any changes to the REF rules have to be broad and not appear to penalise or prioritise any one discipline over another.

HEFCE therefore appeals to the conceptual flexibility of OA in order to implement a policy that prioritises ‘getting eyes on research papers’ in accordance with the publishers’ demands. OA is framed as the mere provision of access to research articles via repositories, as opposed to a more systemic change of the publishing industry that would involve new business models, approaches to copyright, etc. The conceptual flexibility of OA permits this framing – it can mean free-to-access research at one end of the spectrum or something altogether more systemic, political, economic, and so on – but the basic concept is still recognisable as something that purports to increase the accessibility of research to those currently without it.

So, the governmental policies are intended to represent a journey, but from one neoliberal, pro-business conception of OA to another. The starting point of the journey (the HEFCE policy) is a version of OA that is drafted in accordance with restrictive embargoes, based on publishers’ desires to continue to monetise the intellectual property of articles they publish. This is justified as necessary because many disciplines in the humanities (and elsewhere) do not receive grant funding to pay the APCs set by publishers and so the green route was necessary. The end point of the journey is something resembling a fully OA, gold, CC BY environment

achieved through the payment of article-processing charges to commercial publishers.

But it does not make sense to think of OA as a journey from one fixed point to another. This is because it necessarily entails a flexibility to account for numerous antagonistic positions. I have already shown in the previous chapter that OA has a variety of meanings in different contexts and communities, and so any attempt to standardise it in accordance with one hegemonic position will work against its development as a pluralistic process representing a range of positions and struggles. Each approach to OA is representative of different values and ethical commitments (closures) but these can never be fully reconciled into a homogenised fixed solution. They are what Derrida would term ‘undecidable’, something that is not dichotomous or fixed, but that remains a continuum or infinite range of possibilities. The undecidable, Derrida writes, is not something to be ‘traversed or overcome’ by the taking of a decision but instead is insurmountable and constantly in need of renewal through the taking of decisions. It is in this way that ‘morality continues, that history and politics continue’ (Derrida 1996, 87).

The governmental policies are illustrative of what happens when a powerful actor seeks to lock down the meaning of OA in accordance with a particular hegemonic approach (in this instance in the form of a ‘journey’), and especially how this has a detrimental impact on specific communities in the humanities whose publishing practices and funding situations differ from the more financially advantaged scientific disciplines. The policies also omit significant viewpoints on what the move to openness is trying to achieve. For example, many forms of OA are closely associated with implementing not-for-profit forms of publishing or those that seek to reduce the overall reduction in costs of publishing in the face of rising subscription costs and squeezed library budgets. Though for Johnson this is not HEFCE’s intention:

OA policies can legitimately seek to maximise the benefit side of the equation without necessarily tackling the cost. In fact, we would argue that while a lot of the assumptions around this are untested still, for the UK, the modest increase in costs associated with delivering OA in the way that it is currently being delivered will deliver far greater benefits (B. Johnson 2016, 7).

This is a strong statement and runs counter to a significant part of OA advocacy that situates the move to OA as a way of lowering the overall cost of scholarly communications, or at least challenging the dominance of a small number of large subscription publishers. Indeed, the dysfunctional economics of traditional publishing forms the basis of the overwhelming majority of arguments for open access (Suber 2012, chap. 2; Eve 2014b, chap. 2; Willinsky 2006, 7). The HEFCE policy sidesteps these arguments and instead focuses on implementing a kind of OA that works alongside traditional journal publishing rather than confronting it. While this does not mean HEFCE would not like to see the costs reduced (and this is certainly a concern for Johnson personally), it is seen as a ‘separate issue and one that we [HEFCE] can deliver OA without tackling’ (B. Johnson 2016, 7).

Again, this reflects a certain conceptual flexibility that HEFCE employs with its policy for OA – i.e., that it does not necessarily entail an intervention into the economics of publishing. OA, for HEFCE, does not need to impact on the economics of publishing in order to still be considered OA. This is how the conservative understanding of OA is justified as merely getting ‘eyes on research papers’. However, this conceptual flexibility is not extended to all areas of scholarship and disciplines, such as the humanities. Monographs, for example, do not form part of the initial HEFCE policy on OA, though HEFCE does plan to introduce a requirement for monographs in future. This is because the models are not sufficiently developed to allow for a mandate OA for monographs. As Johnson argues: ‘Those opportunities do not exist for books and the things that are emerging are not palatable to a lot of academics – book processing charges for instances’ (B. Johnson 2016, 5).

The idea that the market for OA books is in a nascent stage is one of the main conclusions of the government-commissioned report: ‘Monographs and Open Access: A report to HEFCE’ by Geoffrey Crossick. This report was intended to explore whether it would be possible to mandate OA for monographs in the next REF. In concluding that no one model will be, one of the main policy recommendations was that ‘funders should play a role in facilitating through pilots and the formulation of standards those developments that will help digital open access realise its potential for innovation in research communication, collaboration and practice’ (Crossick 2015, 69). So far, there has been little to no action to facilitate pilots and standards as recommended – Johnson agrees this is a ‘fair

criticism' of HEFCE (B. Johnson 2016, 14). HEFCE's inaction here signals that monographs, and consequently humanities disciplines, are less important in the move to OA (or, at least, not the main priority). While it is certainly true that OA for books is still in a relatively nascent stage (compared with journal articles), omitting books and book chapters from the policy signals to humanities researchers that OA does not apply to a significant amount of their research outputs (especially as over half the submissions to Panel D of the 2014 REF were book-based (HEFCE 2014b)). This is despite a rich ecosystem of OA book publishers in the humanities – as the next chapter explores – and a range of models for providing OA for books. Yet the larger and more prestigious monograph presses rely on book processing charges to provide OA that sometimes total up to £15,000, which would be unaffordable for HEFCE to mandate in all universities.

This means that the humanities, whose influence on the policy is clear (in addition to the policy's omission of monographs), have to start further back in the perceived journey to OA and will need to catch up, reinforcing the idea that the humanities are conservative and uninterested in OA, while presuming that all disciplines are heading in the same direction. To the extent that this conservatism is true, it is unlikely that it will be addressed by a top-down mandate that operates in a vacuum that fails to address the political-economic motivations for open access. What is lost from this is OA as a grassroots activity; that it means something more than just freely accessible papers but also cultural change driven by researchers themselves *in opposition* to the cultures imposed by commercial publishing. OA is not a fixed point or a thing-in-itself, as the HEFCE policies imply, but something that encourages experimentation within academic publishing.

But such an understanding of OA would alienate a number of the stakeholders with a vested interest in the current system, and HEFCE needs to maintain the status quo by appealing to the interests of powerful stakeholders. This is *interessement* at work: HEFCE are in a position of authority over universities but less so over publishers and, by extension, learned societies with financial ties to publishers. In order to enrol them as allies, HEFCE ensures the policy is as minimally impactful on publishers as possible. This is in distinction to the RCUK policy through which the publishers are enrolled as allies by the prospect of large APCs in return for adapting their processes. This leaves universities tasked with putting in place the infrastructures and processes for the HEFCE policy, despite

Johnson's claim that repository-based OA is only a transition to full OA (and therefore only temporary, one might assume). It is now worth turning to the policies' implementation to see how it translates into practical action in the two universities studied.

Policy implementation in two UK universities

The case studies focused on one Russell Group university and one from the former 1994 Group (both will remain anonymous)⁶. While the 1994 Group is now defunct, the distinction between Russell Group and 1994 Group is still useful for distinguishing between the smaller and larger research-intensive universities. Russell Group universities tend to be wealthier and more scientifically focused than universities from the former 1994 Group. In terms of total funding for OA, the Russell Group universities receive roughly one third more in RCUK block grant money per full time employee than the former 1994 Group universities (RCUK 2012a). There is also a large disparity between the universities within the Russell and 1994 Groups that receive the most and least amount of block grant money for APCs: Cambridge receives the most at £1,151,812 while SOAS receives the least at £17,352 (based on the first year's allocation). The allocation is based on the number of RCUK grants each university received and is reflective of the scientific bent of Russell Group universities who attract more grant money from the research councils.

Importantly, RCUK stipulated that the block grants do not have to be spent exclusively on APCs but can be used for infrastructures and staff related to OA, even though they are intended to help universities comply with the RCUK policy. Universities are able to divert this funding to non-APC publishing as long as enough remains to pay for necessary APCs for RCUK papers. Both university librarians reported using their block grants for more than just APCs, either for staff or repository maintenance. However, they also reported underspending their block grants (quite significantly in each case) because they needed to ensure that enough funds were available to pay for the APCs of any RCUK-compliant articles. The block grants are therefore a double-edged sword that can be used for anything related

⁶ Interviews at the former 1994 Group university were conducted on 29/01/2016. Interviews at the Russell Group university were conducted on the 13/01/2016 (librarian), 02/02/2016 (academic director of research) and 09/02/2016 (research administrator).

to OA providing enough money is left over to pay for the indeterminate number of APCs required. Both universities reported that the unknown number of APCs and the lack of reporting requirements stipulated by RCUK made long-term financial planning for OA difficult, especially given that there is no maximum limit set on – they could range from anything between £300 and £5000 (Lawson 2015).

These difficulties are compounded by the additional labour and responsibilities that university librarians have taken on in response to the policy. Both institutions have implemented processes and assigned staff to ensure policy compliance. This includes institution-wide policies to complement the overall policy framework, instructional (non-mandatory) workshops with departments and staff assigned to monitor and encourage compliance. This is now a common role in many universities; job titles such as Open Access Compliance Officer, Repository Assistant and Open Access Support Assistant are increasingly commonplace in the wake of the policy. Furthermore, universities already maintain institutional repositories, each populated by hundreds of research articles. They are also now required to maintain resources related to the policy, such as user guides, details on each policy and general arguments in favour of OA. Staff have workflows in place to monitor compliance, although this involves manually searching for researchers' publications in various article indices ('it isn't simple', Russell Group librarian). Given this, the compliance monitoring at both universities tends to be reactive and requires librarians to ensure that academics have all the information they need to comply. They encourage academics to contact the library directly for help with complying with the policy. The strategy for compliance centres on providing accurate information on the policies, spreading the message online and in person, and being receptive to queries from academics. This all represents a significant undertaking on the part of universities (and librarians specifically).

Not only is this an increasing burden, it is also a burden that cannot be easily measured or reduced to material outcomes. It is, as a Maurizio Lazzarato would define, 'immaterial labour' (1997). The policies require librarians to take on additional, incremental labour for no increase in salary. Immaterial labour is a hallmark of neoliberalism, austerity politics and the need to 'do more with less'. Immaterial labour is common across the university system, particularly as universities are now funded heavily by tuition fees (and less by the state) and have to operate more as businesses than ever before (e.g., De Angelis and Harvie 2009). The

OA policies increase librarians' workloads in this way – as an extra, immaterial responsibility of their positions.

But the additional work undertaken by librarians in fulfilment of the policy is also 'invisible', borrowing a term from Strauss and Star. This refers to the kind of work that renders the work or worker invisible, or part of the background, and relegates their labour to an expectation. As Strauss and Star write: 'If one looked, one could literally see the work being done – but the taken for granted status means that it is functionally invisible' (Star and Strauss 1999, 20). Because invisible work is taken for granted, it allows workloads to fluctuate with the expectation that services should remain as normal, despite the same levels of resources being given to it. The Russell Group librarian reports how 'nobody is pushing me to do this. I am driving it'. This is because it is an expectation that OA is something related to the library and is left for them to manage.

As a consequence of this extra work, librarians are forced to divert their work from scholar-led or alternative forms of OA, such as (in one university's case) helping academics host their own journals. The former 1994 Group librarian writes:

In practice, we're implementing funder policy. Our work has been directed around funder policy and there is less opportunity to do what we like around the wider stuff around open access. Sometimes we say that we really want to talk about open access more openly rather than simply answering queries and making sure people are doing things, checking they're paying things. We are process driven because needs must. (Librarian, former 1994 Group).

In the push for compliance, staff are forced to divert their time away from working on the 'wider stuff' around OA and engaging researchers in how to work through OA issues beyond the policies. This is how the librarians cope with the extra immaterial labour needed to comply with the policy. It means that greater priority is given to governmental forms of OA, and the values they promote, rather than the more pluralistic, diverse forms that are representative of the undecidable space previously described.

Yet it is understandable why universities did not object to the policy, despite having to take on the responsibility for the necessary infrastructure and compliance. The Russell Group universities responded to the HEFCE consultation by welcoming

the ‘cost effective’ approach that avoided the problematic ‘lack of funding to play article processing charges’ (Russell Group 2013). This is because the repository option is much more palatable out of the choice between repositories and APCs, which were the choices as presented by the governmental funders. Universities assented to the policy because they already maintain their own repositories and it was a less expensive option to paying APCs for all outputs. Repository deposit is also preferable to universities who are able to share the additional ‘invisible’ labour between their staff and academics, as opposed to series of potentially large fixed cost that APCs represent.

On policy compliance and wider OA adoption

A great deal of the policy’s success – and the success of the government’s proposed ‘journey’ to OA – will depend on whether researchers are willing to comply with the policy. Participants were asked how they felt researchers would react to the policy, in both its spirit and letter, especially given its top-down nature. Though of course it is not possible to tell how researchers will ultimately receive the policy, the perceptions of university staff will help us understand the kinds of cultures that the policy framework may promote.

For the average researcher who has not yet encountered openness or open publishing practices, the policy presents OA as something with which researchers must comply for extrinsic benefits. The REF is already a source of anxiety for researchers and so there is a potential to associate OA with the anxiety of research assessment and competition. If this is the case, academics would comply with the policy for mere reasons of compliance and nothing else. More research will be available for public access via institutional repositories, which was the intention of the policy, but researchers will not be adopting an open culture for any intrinsic benefits. This was the feeling of the academic director of research at the Russell Group university:

[The policy] should be sufficient because people want to be submitted to the REF. So it is instrumental – only a minority of people will be motivated out of desire for open access, that it is a good thing to do in itself. (Academic Director of Research, Russell Group).

Nevertheless, although the HEFCE policy is clearly a priority for librarians (as we have seen), the interviewees were concerned that researchers are apathetic. This was a common concern across the interviews:

Most people will see it as an administrative demand and we will have an apparatus of chasing and reminding people to do this. (Academic Director of Research, Russell Group university).

One of the senior [humanities] admins just said ‘I don’t know how we’re going to make this happen’. I agreed. People are busy, they have other priorities. How can you force someone to do something? (Librarian, Russell Group university).

HEFCE say that deposit on acceptance will get the academic involved but I don’t think it does really, it just passes the buck onto people like us who are chasing them. (Librarian, former 1994 Group university).

It’s more of a burden than it should be. I would have liked to have had a mediated service [between academics and the repository] but the institution chose not to for budgetary reasons. (Research Administrator, former 1994 Group university).

One of the biggest worries about policy compliance was that researchers are simply not interested in open access; they are busy, have other priorities and will need more than just instructions on how to use the repository to convince them to upload their papers. Librarians and administrators are concerned that the burden will fall disproportionately on their shoulders.

The potential resistance from academics explains why librarians, academic directors of research and research administrators have gone to great lengths to put in place workflows for training and chasing academics to comply with the policy. They feel that academics need a great deal of guidance and support and so try to take as much responsibility for the policy away from them as possible. In light of this, both universities reported looking into the possibility of depositing all articles on behalf of their researchers, though this was too financially prohibitive and so article deposit rests ultimately with the researchers themselves. This form of so-called mediated deposit has been adopted by at least one institution in the UK, which allows researchers to deposit their articles in the institutional repository by email rather than

through the repository itself (University of Nottingham Library 2016). This process does still require researchers to inform staff when a paper is ready to be submitted, but the prediction is that an email is less burdensome than a repository interface and will result in greater compliance. Universities therefore look to take on as much responsibility for complying with the policy as possible given financial restraints.

Even if universities had enough staff to ensure 100% compliance, the policy is designed in a way that only researchers themselves can know when a paper needs to be uploaded to the repository. The policy stipulates that an article should be uploaded to a repository no more than three months after the paper's acceptance in a journal, rather than after its publication, and so only researchers can know this date. The Russell Group university librarian argued there is a mismatch between who needs to act (researchers) and who is punished if researchers do not act (universities more generally):

The consequences of academics not taking action are that the institution will pay the price is that the institution will play the price in terms of poor REF submission and poor academic funding. The real impact of what you're doing is in the institutional level. So there is a mismatch in that you're trying to put pressure on these people [academics] but the consequences will fall there [universities]. (Russell Group university librarian).

This point is debateable, as academics will be punished if their research is not submitted to the REF. Nonetheless, universities have reputations to protect and funding to obtain, and it is strongly in their interest to comply as far as possible. Some will argue that this is the intention of the policy and should increase compliance as the responsibility is spread throughout the university. However, the resulting state of affairs may be one in which institutions do everything on behalf of researchers. Any change in researcher behaviour would be motivated out of self-interest, or simply to comply with the REF policy, rather than a commitment to the broader dissemination of scholarship.

So the resistance of researchers is perceived to be strong by those responsible for the HEFCE policy implementation. Such a perception may in fact be self-fulfilling: the more institutions take responsibility away from researchers, the more researchers will feel that OA is not their responsibility or concern. This is a result of

the mediating role of university staff: they translate the policy into something they consider too important for researchers to be responsible for, which results in the creation of numerous processes, workflows, and the hiring of staff, all of which at a cost to the university⁷. In the end, universities will do whatever they can to ensure REF success and maintain competitiveness relative to other universities.

From the interviews with librarians and academic directors of research, there is a clear impression that the HEFCE policy will not directly result in a broader adoption of OA practices by the average researcher (beyond mere policy compliance). However, it will undoubtedly result in greater public access to research articles – which is the primary intention of the policy. For those interested in promoting cultural change around publishing practices, any incremental benefits may be outweighed by researchers’ annoyance and anxiety over the increased bureaucracy of the policy. This may even discourage researchers *already* engaged in open practices, let alone those researchers HEFCE is trying to convince. This is a similar point made in a blog post by the Research Support staff of Brunel University:

There is now a danger of alienating through bureaucracy those authors already committed to the cause and readily engaged in open practice, whilst simultaneously creating a culture of anxiety. In this environment, the true value of open scholarship within the research lifecycle is potentially reduced to the language of compliance and REF eligibility. (Walters and Daley 2016).

Of course, it is impossible to tell what the levels of compliance will be until the policy is well underway, and it is not possible to know academics’ enthusiasm for OA and the policies without talking to a number of them (which was not the purpose of this research).

The governmental approach to OA and the *logic of choice*

From the research presented in this chapter, we can see that the UK government’s OA policy framework is reflective of the neoliberal market logic that is the dominant organisational philosophy of contemporary global politics. We see

⁷ See Dobson (2016) for more on the estimated cost per article of each manuscript deposit.

here an approach to OA that is taken in accordance with market principles and the primary need to maintain the status quo by appeasing commercial publishers. I am employing the term neoliberalism here in a Foucauldian context, referring to the form of ‘political rationality’ employed by the ruling power as a justification for their governance. Neoliberalism here means more than mere a hyper-intense form of capitalism; rather, as Wendy Brown describes, it is the “‘governing rationality’,...the way that neoliberalism comes to govern as the dominant form of reason’ (Brown 2015, 115). Neoliberalism reaches into all aspects of governance by, as Foucault explains, ‘taking the formal principles of a market economy and referring and relating them to, projecting them on to a general art of government’ (Foucault 2008, 131).

Foucault’s understanding of neoliberalism is helpful for explaining the governmental approach to OA. The RCUK policy seeks private solutions and market competition wherever possible. This is why funding is freed up for APCs to be paid and a new market created for OA publishing. There is no cap on the cost of APCs and commercial publishers have reaped the benefits as a result (Lawson 2015). The HEFCE policy, on the other hand, is more applicable to humanities disciplines that receive less funding and are unable to pay APCs. Without extensive funding, they are less useful to the private sector. Yet the government still requires the HEFCE policy to conform to market logic and the protection of the publishing industry. This is why the policy operates in parallel with subscription publishing, by permitting long embargos on publications, and not in opposition to it, despite a common motivation for OA being *in opposition* to the market practices of commercial publishers. From the perspective of either policy, each one conforms to the understanding of neoliberalism that projects the principles of the market onto the art of governance.

To take this further, the policies can be theorised in accordance with what Annemarie Mol terms a ‘logic of choice’, which justifies an action or intervention by the extent to which it promotes individual choice through market participation. Looking specifically at healthcare, Mol interrogates the ways in which diabetes is treated in various ways along a continuum between *choice* and *care*. The former prioritises individual decision-making and draws a ‘limit’ on what treatment is on offer, while the latter promotes a form of treatment that is ‘open-ended’ and based on a continual process of supporting the patient in their unique circumstances (Mol

2008, 18). Although both care and choice can refer to market participation, the discourse of ‘customer choice’ is intimately connected with the increased marketisation of healthcare provision.

While the logic of care will be explored as a point of comparison in later chapters, we can theorise the governmental policy framework as conforming to a logic of choice. The governmental policies are justified in accordance with the market power of those who are affected. For example, wealthy scientific disciplines are permitted to exercise their choice to stimulate a new market for APC-based publishing. The humanities, on the other hand, are treated as conservative and unable to participate in OA in the same way as other disciplines because they lack the market power of choice. They have to start further back in the journey to OA because of their financial situation, accepting a form of OA provided through repositories that is subjected to long embargos. This narrative is emphasised by the fact that monographs are not covered by the REF policy despite their importance to humanities scholarship. An OA policy for monographs is difficult to square financially without either excluding prestigious publishers or having monographs treated as second-class objects in repositories (and subject to long embargos).

The funding bodies therefore appeal to the freedom of researchers as market participants and their individual choice to publish with the same presses they have always done. The extent to which researchers can make their work OA, however, is dependent on their ability to pay. The policies still treat OA with some degree of flexibility, as a boundary object, but only in accordance with how flexible the government determines it should be, particularly as determined by the more powerful stakeholders. OA can be CC-BY, gold and APC-based where funding is available *or* green and limited to long embargos where no funding is available, but little is done to recognise the potential of any other direction. Johnson highlights the government’s preference for a ‘journey’ towards the RCUK conception of OA, but this can only be achieved on the terms that conform to market logic rather than those in support of, for example, scholar-, library- or university press-led approaches to OA. To this extent, the government policies *enclose* the concept of OA in a narrow way that seeks consensus with the private sector, rather than pushes for an experimental, community-led understanding of the term.

Tying OA to an instrument of assessment like the REF may also serve to discourage researchers from adopting open practices more generally, as the

interviews suggested, by associating it with an already anxiety-inducing bureaucratic exercise. Researchers will hear from administrators and librarians of the need to comply with the policy, but less about why OA is a good thing in the first place. OA is imposed in accordance with how much researchers are willing to tolerate rather than why open publishing practices are a good thing to explore. This is compounded by the policy forcing librarians to devote less time to the wider issues around OA and more on policy compliance. There is little to encourage humanities researchers of the reasons for making research openly accessible, the differing contexts in which arguments for OA arise and the political economies to which it responds.

This is because, as an example of neoliberal policymaking, the HEFCE and RCUK policies are focused on measurable outcomes rather than promoting ethical cultures (Lorenz 2012). They are interested in increasing the amount of research that is accessible beyond paywalls rather than instigating a critique of or experimentation around publication cultures and why openness (in all its forms) could be beneficial and worth engaging with. OA is likely to be reduced to a box-ticking exercise for researchers who need to ensure that they comply simply to meet REF requirements. The policies are thus another way of encouraging more competition in the public university in accordance with quantitative metrics and compliance (how open is your research, how much is publicly accessible, etc.). This policy framework introduces a new set of gatekeepers of OA (the government) beyond subscription publishers and continues to ensure that publishing remains out of researcher control. OA, according to the policy framework, now has to be achieved not just in accordance with what publishers will permit, but also in accordance with the ways permitted by RCUK, HEFCE, university administrators and the stretched workloads of librarians and repository managers. It is unlikely that humanities researchers will explore OA as valuable for their own publication practices if they are not allowed to decide the conditions and governance of various approaches to OA.

Conclusion

In arguing that the governmental OA policy framework conforms to a logic of choice shaped by measurable outcomes and market participation, I have illustrated the drawbacks of mandating OA as something merely promoting freely accessible research papers. Not only does this fail to consider any of the broader cultural

problems with publishing that OA could respond to, it also associates OA with compliance and the much-loathed Research Excellence Framework. This could have the effect of actually discouraging researchers from exploring the possibilities of OA, certainly the *radical* possibilities of it, not that this was the intention of the policies themselves. In order to glimpse OA's radical potential, perhaps we need to look away from mandates and compliance and towards OA projects emanating from scholarly communities themselves.

Chapter 4. Scholar-led publishing: grassroots alternatives to OA in the humanities

Introduction

In contrast to the top-down forms of OA mandated by governmental funders, an alternative, grassroots ecosystem of OA presses in the humanities and social sciences has emerged in recent years. Although this ecosystem represents a range of motivations and practices, its defining characteristic is that each press is organised by working academics, rather than by commercial publishers, libraries or traditional university presses. Scholar-led publishing is not a new phenomenon, learned societies such as the Royal Society have taken the lead in publishing for centuries (Fitzpatrick 2012, no pagination), and many ideas relating to OA and public access to research were latent in early scholar-led, web-based publishing experiments, as shown in Chapter 2. However, it is within the explicit contemporary context of OA that the scholar-led publishers I analyse here are uniquely positioned.

Although I group scholar-led publishing as a coherent alternative to the dominant publishing hegemony, the presses analysed here are distinct and have their own individual motivations, practices and constituents. How, then, are scholar-led OA publishers different from other forms of publishing? How is OA understood by scholar-led presses and why is it important to them? This chapter will explore these questions through analysis of interview data with twelve scholar-led presses: Mayfly Books, Roving Eye Press / Electric Press, Punctum Books, Mattering Press, Media Commons Press, Meson Press, Open Humanities Press, Open Book Publishers, Goldsmiths Press, Language Science Press and Counter Press.⁸ They each publish research in the humanities and social sciences, ranging from broad subject coverage to a focus on one or two disciplines only. The majority publish books but some also

⁸ Two publishers were omitted from the analysis, Ubiquity Press and Open Library of Humanities, due to the author's relationship as an employee of Ubiquity Press (who provide publishing services for Open Library of Humanities).

publish journals and born-digital/experimental research (or a combination of all three).

The research presented consists of secondary data analysis of semi-structured interviews of academic-led presses, conducted by Janneke Adema for the Jisc-commissioned report ‘Changing Publishing Ecologies. A Landscape Study of New University Presses and Academic-led Publishing’ (Adema, Stone, and Keene 2017). The interview data is openly available to access on the Jisc repository (Adema 2017). The report was commissioned to understand the ‘take-up, reasoning and characteristics’ of new university press and scholar-led initiatives, concluding with a series of recommendations to ‘help support and foster new developments’ (Adema, Stone, and Keene 2017, 3). The interviewers identified the participants by online research and from a question on scholar-led presses in a survey of new university presses. 18 presses were invited and 14 took part in the interviews via Skype and in person. Interviews were transcribed and edited in collaboration with the interviewees and presented according to three thematic sections: (1) background, motivations and goals; (2) overview of the press’s operations (business models, licenses, policies, etc.); and (3) what support the presses require and how Jisc could help them. (The interview protocol is available as Appendix 2 in the report itself (Adema, Stone, and Keene 2017, 96).) The first section on motivations is particularly useful for the purposes at hand, although the latter two sections were analysed and are cited to a lesser extent.

I am analysing this openly available data because it offers a snapshot into the motivations and values of the scholar-led OA ecosystem in the humanities. The presses analysed here can be grouped as an alternative ecosystem to commercial and university-led approaches that represents a more progressive, theory-led approach to publishing. The interview format affords interviewees the freedom to describe their projects honestly and explicitly in a way that their published articles, blog posts and websites may not necessarily capture. Interviews therefore help draw out the motivations, frustrations and implicit values held by the presses, while allowing a cross-comparison between them that can be grounded in theory. It is important to understand that the presses analysed here are not a homogenised whole but are responding to their own disciplinary traditions and publishing research for unique constituents.

Continuing with the idea of OA as a flexible, loosely-defined concept – theorised as a boundary object – this chapter explores how OA is performed in practice, i.e., how the presses operate under a broadly shared understanding of OA while maintaining highly individualised open practices that are specific to their own political, ethical and disciplinary commitments. This will allow for an assessment of what such an ecosystem means for OA in the humanities, how the concept of OA is understood and utilised by the presses and how they set themselves apart from other approaches to OA (and publishing more generally). I continue with a constructivist/anti-essentialist approach that, alongside boundary object theory, introduces Annemarie Mol's work on the logic of care (in contrast to the logic of choice) to help explain how scholar-led OA presses are best understood as a series of hegemonic interventions in scholarly communication that foreground a relational approach to publishing, rather than one focused purely on outcomes. In the broader context of the thesis, this chapter offers concrete examples of alternatives for OA in the humanities that are distinct from both the non-researcher-led publishing described in Chapter 2 and the UK OA policy framework analysed in Chapter 3. By illustrating their motivations and practices, it is possible to then show what is unique about the scholar-led presses and why they adopt OA for their publications. This will enable a comparison between the approaches adopted by the government and the scholar led presses in the following chapter.

Press motivations: resistance, critique and experimentation

It is clear from the interview data there are a variety of reasons why academics set up their own OA presses. For many scholar-led presses, the publishing industry was simply not meeting their needs or publishing the kinds of content they wanted to see. For example, the German publisher Meson Press was founded to offer an English-language academic press to non-native English speakers, for whom 'it is not always very easy to get into existing academic presses' (Bunz 2017, 1). Nor, Bunz notes, was there a press in Europe specifically dedicated to media studies and so Meson was founded to meet this need. Similarly, Craig Saper launched Roving Eye Press to 'rediscover' and publish the out-of-print works of Bob Brown (Saper 2017, 2), while MediaCommons Press sought to experiment with forms of scholarship that weren't 'strictly textual, or print-based, or linear in format'

(Fitzpatrick 2017, 1). Such divergent motivations reveal the press's desire to meet a disciplinary or cultural need not currently met by the publishing industry.

Yet it is apparent that many of the presses also launched without an explicit understanding of what they were going to publish and how. There is a sense of informality, playfulness or happenstance surrounding some of the publishing efforts analysed here. For Stephen Connelly of Counter Press, book publishing was the simple formalisation of successful online blogposts that the editors felt would benefit from being collected together (Connelly 2017, 1). Similarly, Mattering Press had enjoyed organising workshops together as a collective and 'happened upon' the idea of publishing books as a next project (Deville 2017, 1), while Chris Land of *Ephemera* and Mayfly Books describes their projects as reflecting the 'arrogance of young PHD students thinking that they knew better than anybody else' (Land 2017, 1). *Ephemera* and Mayfly, in particular, represent a fleeting or transient approach to publishing (as represented by their names) that eschews any formality or explicitly thought-through publishing programmes.

Even though many of the presses launched with the intention of representing something different to what the publishing industry offers, the strongest theme to emerge from the interviews was how each press adopts a stance of critique and resistance towards various aspects of the politics of knowledge production. This critique reflects a desire to reclaim control of publishing, particularly from large commercial publishers, in favour of publishing programmes focused on a variety of ethical, political and disciplinary interventions in scholarly communications. Grassroots, scholar-led approaches to OA differ in their values from both the commercial OA landscape and the top-down policies implemented by the UK government, as I will show. It is important to not consider the values on display as held by all the presses or as part of a coherent philosophy for alternative forms of OA publishing. Instead, such alternatives should be seen as providing a space for different values and practices that traditional publishing may not permit.

Many of the interviewed presses exist in opposition to the profit-making activities of commercial publishing. This is a key theme of the OA movement and all the presses analysed here operate on a non-profit basis. Sebastian Nordhoff at Language Science Press describes the high prices charged by commercial publishers for books that prohibit their sharing, leading him to conclude: 'The interests of profit-oriented publishers are incompatible with those of the researchers' (Nordhoff

2017, 1). Chris Land of Counter Press explained the press's motivation of 'trying to take academic publishing back into academic control, resisting the commercialisation, the firewalls, all those kinds of things' (Land 2017, 1). Similarly, Rupert Gatti of Open Book Publishers describes the frustrations felt by one of the press's co-founders whose monograph on Russian literature was too expensive for people living in Russia to purchase it. Consequently, she sends copies of the book to Russian libraries at her own expense (Gatti 2017, 1). The presses therefore define themselves in opposition to commercial publishing and see OA as one way to resist the making profit from scholarly research.

Connected with this critique of commercialisation is the idea that academic-led presses are willing to adopt the kinds of practices that traditional publishers refuse for commercial reasons. Many of the presses therefore experiment in form, subject matter, content and notions of authorship in ways that traditional presses do not permit because they are not monetizable. Eileen Joy, for example, characterises 'traditional' publisher approaches to monograph publishing as: "Sell this overpriced book to roughly 250, 300 libraries, recoup the money and the profit, and then shut the book down.' Drop it off the list, let it go out of print. Who cares? We got our money back and then we move on to the next book: they are all about high volume, low quality' (Joy 2017, 11–12). For some of those interviewed, traditional publishing carries with it the need to recuperate costs at the expense of quality, diversity and experimentation.

Similarly, Kathleen Fitzpatrick describes how MediaCommons Press was formed in order to disseminate open, born-digital, annotate-able works that publishers were too risk averse or ill-equipped to publish themselves:

The main goal, really, was to be able to facilitate that kind of conversation around the material that we wanted to have. This was in 2009, when we released *Planned Obsolescence*. It was a very easy process for us, as individuals, to be able to set up a server running WordPress, to be able to create the template, use the plug-ins that we need, set it up under the auspices of MediaCommons, and draw together an audience that would have the discussion that we were looking to have. A press at that time was really not able, in the same way, to support that kind of work. They weren't technologically equipped. They didn't have the skill bases that they needed

in order to do that. They had a necessary risk averseness, simply because of the ways that their budgets functioned, that wouldn't allow them to do that kind of experimentation without a whole lot of study, a whole lot of preparation, and a whole lot of practical concerns that, as an individual, I simply didn't have at that time. (Fitzpatrick 2017, 1).

There is a theme here that traditional publishers are conservative by their nature. This is reflective of restrictive business models that encourage standardisation, limited budgetary allocations or simply a lack of expertise in the technology needed for such experimentation. In contrast, scholar-led publishers are able to determine not just what they publish but *how* they publish too. For Fitzpatrick, setting up MediaCommons herself was easier and more practical than working with a pre-existing press. Scholar-led publishing offers a kind of freedom and flexibility that other forms do not.

In pushing back against the standardisation and conservatism entailed in traditional publishing, many of the scholar-led presses adopt much looser approaches to business models and how they influence the kinds of research published. Open Humanities Press describe 'cost minimization rather than revenue generation' as a guiding principle (Open Humanities Press 2017, 4), while Open Book Publishers equally claim to not be 'fixated' on any business model but sustain their efforts through a number of sources. Presses such as Mayfly and Mattering report no ongoing institutional support but small grants received occasionally. While there is a mixture of practices on display between the completely do-it-yourself approach and more formalised attempts at revenue generation, none of the scholar-led press have anything close to a large, formalised and salaried staff found in university presses and commercial publishers. This speaks more to a culture of resilience than one wedded to a unitary, sustainable way of doing things, which is perhaps representative of the ephemeral and experimental nature of some of the presses, as opposed to their long-term plans for sustainability.

Intimately bound up with the critique of commercial publishing and the standardisation it entails is a broader questioning of the practices and values within higher education itself. Many of the presses emphasised the ways in which higher education reinforces current publishing practices, particularly with respect to what

‘counts’ as a publication – especially for career and funding purposes – and how this shapes humanities research. For example, Chris Land of Mayfly Books argues against the ‘institutional forces that are delegitimising the project from the outset’ in their requirement for publications from established presses (Land 2017, 6). Eileen Joy highlights how Punctum Books confronts this situation by giving legitimacy to ‘weird’ publications:

To have a press to literally promote the work that everybody wants to do but isn’t allowed to do and yet, at the same time though, in order not to be just considered that fringe press over there that publishes the weird things that no one will give you credit for, for your national research exercise, at the same time we would surround the venture with the apparatus of a very legitimate press (Joy 2017, 2).

Joy cites independent, avant-garde presses such as Semiotext(e) and Urbanomic as influences who maintain a high reputation in their fields while publishing ‘edgy, creative’ work (Joy 2017, 9). Punctum seeks to offer an OA outlet for this kind of work, along the lines of Derrida’s idea of the ‘university without condition’ – or ‘the principle right to say everything...and the right to say it publicly, to publish it’ (Derrida 2001, 26).

But the contemporary neoliberal university does have conditions. There is a tension that many presses note between critique and experimentation on the one hand and the need to conform to certain expectations of the university on the other. For Joy, it is ‘hard to balance’ the desire to experiment with the need for legitimacy and sustainability. Similarly, Open Humanities Press aims to demonstrate the possibility of ‘high-profile, prestigious OA’, while Mattering Press seeks to publish well-known scholars in order to gain a ‘high degree of credibility’ so early-career researchers will be able to publish with them too. Counter Press seeks funding from its institution (via the REF) for the ‘impact’ it demonstrates in exploring how law is ‘actually being applied in the world’ (Connelly 2017, 7). There is a need, therefore, for some of the new OA publishers to pragmatically conform to traditional standards around prestige, reputation and impact, which will afford them experimentation in other areas.

This pragmatism is also reflective in the tension between theory and practice that necessarily arises in such endeavours. The academics who run each press are all scholars in the humanities and social sciences, ranging from permanently-employed academics to precariously-employed and para-academic researchers, and many see their publishing work as an extension of their scholarly work. Mayfly Books speak of ‘politicising the business school in the sense of unpacking the power relations in our own institutional location [...]. I guess that fits with the project of academic publishing, where we can reflect on our own practice and then politicise that and do something differently’ (Land 2017, 4). Similarly, Eileen Joy (quoting Gary Hall of Open Humanities Press in the first line) writes:

‘How do you apply your theoretical principles to the structures that make your work visible?’ Whether it is your university position, or your book: do you care about the machinations behind that? Where is your critique of the administrative bureaucracy of your own institution or of the institutions that publish your work? I have always felt that way myself, that if we are theorists, if we are radical, critical theorists, then our critique should aim at a transformation of the actual systems within which we work (Joy 2017, 4).

So, for Joy, Punctum Books is a theory-led intervention into publishing that highlights and seeks to transform the ‘machinations’ involved in knowledge production, be they the university, publishing, funding bodies, and so on.

As with the tension between theory and practice, the presses are forced to make decisions concerning their ethical stances and when to adopt a more strategic approach that might appear to conflict with them. Each press has a remit, often politically progressive, but is forced to participate in certain practices that would not necessarily conform to this remit. It is not possible to be ideologically pure, especially when having to rely on commercial services such as Amazon for selling books and web-hosting, and Ingram Books for print-on-demand services. A number of presses remark upon this as a source of frustration, but unavoidable without a great deal of effort (Deville 2017; Saper 2017; Land 2017; Connelly 2017; Joy 2017). Chris Land assert that using Amazon ‘kind of makes all of the political arguments I was trying to make earlier a bit rubbish’ (Land 2017, 6). Each press is

forced to make a choice as to when it adopts a more pragmatic approach over an explicitly critical one.

But this pragmatism is itself a kind of political responsibility, the kind that is necessary for the possibility of any politics. Despite positioning themselves in opposition to the status quo of academic knowledge production, scholar-led presses are forced to make difficult decisions that may appear to conflict with their general ethico-political outlook, what Ernesto Laclau would term their ‘ethical investment’ (Laclau 2002, unpaginated). This responsibility for the taking of decisions is a feature of ethics and politics as I have so far conceived it, following Derrida, Laclau and Mouffe in particular. As Derrida writes: ‘A decision that didn’t go through the ordeal of the undecidable would not be a free decision, it would only be the programmable application or unfolding of a calculable process’ (Derrida 1992a, 24). Politics and ethics are always in progress, rather than a fixed project or plan to be rolled out, and so the scholar-led presses are continually making decisions about how to act on their critiques of the status quo, even if though these decisions are difficult or have the appearance of a contradiction.

It is also revealing that many of the presses are quite conservative in the formats of the publications they produce, relying on the codex print form and standard copyright, often alongside Creative Commons licenses that prohibit reuse or adaption (Land 2017, 12; Joy 2017; Gatti 2017). This is not to say that all presses declare a motivation to disrupt ideas around print, copyright and notions of authorship, but more that there is occasionally a disconnection between the subject matter and the forms in which it is published. For example, Kathleen Kennedy’s *Medieval Hackers*, published by Punctum Books, explores early manuscript cultures as indicative of proto-hacker cultures: ‘Open and accessible to a general audience, these texts circulated freely. The medieval hackers used texts in the information commons, changed them to suit local needs, and released them out into the commons again, to be used and modified further by the next hacker in need of them’ (K. E. Kennedy 2015, 139). As a book espousing the value of the ‘information commons’ it is somewhat jarring that the author decided to publish their work under a CC BY-NC-ND licence that prevents many of the practices the author describes. Joy describes how Punctum specifically allows ‘re-mixing, building, redistribution, sharing’ and so this would be an option the author could choose (Joy 2017, 10). Such decisions highlight the tension between the rhetoric of openness and the strategic

need by presses to grant authors the freedom to release the work how they see fit, even if this means doing so in a way that dilutes the press's apparent commitment to openness.

The materiality of scholar-led publishing

Despite the talk of radical and experimental motivations for their projects, the *materiality* of much of scholar-led publishing remains identifiable with more traditional publishing projects. This is to say that, in terms of form, the books of scholar-led presses tend (though not exclusively) to resemble books of the presses from which they distinguish themselves. They are well-designed, typeset print codex books and the print copies are often sold through slick and professional websites. Many of the presses discuss the importance of publishing and design standards as a way of gaining legitimacy as publishers (Bunz 2017; Deville 2017; Gatti 2017). Again, such a strategy is reflective of the kinds of decisions taken to afford experimentation in other areas or to ensure long-term survival. The presses cannot stand too far outside the mainstream because they need to convince authors (who equally need to publish with 'respected' presses) to publish with them. Having well-designed, high-quality publications is one way of achieving this.

Yet there are exceptions to such conservatism and presses such as Open Humanities and MediaCommons engage in publishing that is specifically designed to play with the form of the book. For example, MediaCommons is dedicated to related to forms of publishing that are composed and edited online in accordance with iterative, public annotations, often mixing a range of multimedia content (Fitzpatrick 2017, 1). MediaCommons publications look quite different from traditional print-codex monographs and instead resemble digital palimpsests with multiple levels of annotation and commentary. Similarly, Open Humanities Presse released a series entitled *Living Books about Life* that featured books composed primarily of freely available scientific articles collated on a particular topic aimed at bridging the gap between the sciences and humanities (Open Humanities Press 2017, 5). These books can be built on, downloaded and remixed in a way that highlights how the book form itself can be considered a living object that is constantly open to flux. Nonetheless, it is worth bearing in mind that across the presses, experimentation in the *materiality* of the book (or journal) is more of the exception

rather than the rule, even though this potential for experimentation is continually present in much of the scholar-led press interviews.

Alongside publications, the infrastructural elements of scholar-led publishing are another important consideration. Much like with book publications, scholar-led presses both embrace and shun certain common infrastructures for publishing. For example, many of the presses talk about the necessity of tapping into book distribution services. Goldsmiths Press books are distributed through MIT Press and Open Book Publishers, punctum and Language Science Press explicitly mention the need to improve distribution networks to libraries. Similarly, many of the presses mention the need to conform to best practices for metadata standards, licensing and contractual considerations, suggesting that a certain level of homogenisation and standardisation is beneficial for their operations. Standardisation helps with interoperability and scaling, even if it entails a certain homogenisation of the material elements of scholar-led publishing that may smooth over local contexts or prevent non-standard practices.

For Leigh Star, infrastructure is a kind of materiality that is unique for both its ‘embeddedness’ and ‘transparency’ (Star 1999, 381). Infrastructures, for Star, operate in the background and are therefore invisible until they break down. They are also ‘sunk into other structures, social arrangements and technologies’ and ‘embody’ certain standards (ibid). This means that infrastructures are not easily divisible, recognisable or compartmentalised. It is thus incredibly difficult to run a publishing programme that does not interact with (or is defined in some ways) by certain publishing standards, networks and infrastructures. The infrastructural practices of the scholar-led publishers represent Kember and Zylinska’s claim (mentioned in the introduction to this thesis) of the importance of learning to ‘cut well’ in material-discursive decision-making (Kember and Zylinska 2012). Particularly when it comes to books, so much of the process of publishing is determined by standards and essentialisms that enforce certain expected material formations. Infrastructural considerations both require good cuts while still, as Adema terms it, ‘enabling space for the vitality of becoming’ (Adema 2015, 213). Decisions need to be made on when to foreground homogeneity or difference.

From an infrastructural perspective, what distinguishes the scholar-led publishers, however, is their desire to collaborate on issues around infrastructures, recognising the benefits of mutual reliance and solidarity in areas of shared interest.

This is in contrast to market-driven forms of publishing for which there is a disincentive to collaborate. The next section explores this idea of collaboration further in the tension between shared and singular understandings of the term ‘open access’.

Understandings of open access

I deliberately deferred discussing the different understandings of OA held by the presses until now because, perhaps counterintuitively for a thesis on OA in the humanities, it does not appear to be the chief concern of all the presses analysed. Suffice to say that all the interviewed presses are ‘open access’ publishers and forms of openness are clearly important to their work. Though understood in various ways by the interviewed presses, OA is best thought of as instrumentally rather than intrinsically valuable, something enabling other practices and not the chief motivation of each press. The following quote from Sarah Kember describing the motivations of Goldsmiths Press illustrates this point well:

We really wanted to open out against the current constraints posed by commercialisation, standardisation and audit. I would distinguish this goal – challenging marketing categories and silos, looking beyond the standard monograph or textbook format, taking on the conservatism generated by the REF – as more urgent and important than adhering to a particular, i.e. open access publishing model or buying in to the division between legacy publishing and online/open access publishing. (Kember 2017, 1).

Taking a similar position, Open Humanities Press reiterates Adema and Hall’s understanding of OA as a ‘critical struggle’ (2013) rather than a unified thing-in-itself:

Open access, for us, is to be understood *less* as a homogeneous project striving to become a dominating force, and *more* as an ongoing critical struggle, or series of struggles. One of the advantages of conceptualizing open access as a process of struggle rather than as a model to be implemented is to create more space for radically different, conflicting, even

incommensurable positions within the larger movement, including those that *are* concerned with experimenting with the *form of the book* and the way our system of scholarly communication currently operates. We see OHP as being very much part of such an ongoing struggle and process of experimentation. (Open Humanities Press 2017, 2).

These two positions reflect an understanding of OA that is not wedded to a particular dominant or hegemonic understanding of the term. OA allows scholar-led publishers to work through certain issues in publishing by promoting critical resistance and alternatives to traditional approaches. In facilitating these kinds of critical interventions, each press adopts its own model, definition or understanding of OA. Thinking about OA in this relational and processual way illustrates how it is embedded in the relationships and communities in which each press participates, rather than as a disinterested category that presses can choose whether or not to adopt. Each press has its own understanding of OA, which is subject to flux, change and various closures, based on a general approach of gifting publications in accordance with various conditions.

This is also reflected in Rupert Gatti's claim that Open Book Publishers was founded 'to make good humanities research available free to read online. Open Access in its broader sense came later, in fact we didn't even know about Open Access probably when it was decided to go into this' (Gatti 2017, 1). Rather than conforming to a particular understanding of OA, such as the Budapest Open Access Initiative (BOAI 2002), many of the presses began with a motivation that they later learned fitted with a broader 'open access movement' (Mattering Press being another example). This theme appears to be common across the presses interviewed; many presses initially adopted practices that fit with their motivations rather than because they conform to a particular ideal of OA. Punctum Books' 'graduated open access' is another example, whereby works are toll-access for the first year of publication. Only one of the presses (Language Science Press) has adopted CC BY as default, the licence that conforms to the BOAI definition referenced above that many consider to be canonical, while the others offer authors a range of licenses or do not publishing with Creative Commons at all. They are therefore not beholden to a particular understanding of OA.

Across the interviewed presses, then, one can see nuanced, singular forms of OA that are each intimately connected with the practices and motivations of each publisher, rather than stemming from an external OA movement particularly associated with the natural sciences. OA is clearly valued by the presses for many different reasons, not as an unquestioned good, but in a manner that conforms to the values each press is invested in and wishes to explore. For example, in a separate journal article Sarah Kember of Goldsmiths Press argues against overly simplistic dichotomies of open/closed; public/private, etc. and instead focus on ‘publishing processes and relations’ (Kember 2014, unpaginated). Similarly, Endre Dányi and Joe Deville of Mattering Press write in a blog post that openness implies various acts of closure; each press is forced to decide what closures to make and why (Dányi and Deville 2014, unpaginated). The politics of openness can only be made sense of with respect to the closures and decisions taken within each press’s sphere of operation, rather than as a totalising category that applies to all things equally. As the Mattering editors write: ‘The question is not whether OA is a good development or not, but what differences are we interested in making, for whom, and under what circumstances’ (ibid). These ‘differences’ represent certain ethical and political commitments that are frequently absent from market-based forms of publishing.

Resilient OA

Not only is there a plurality of financial models between presses, there is often a plurality within each press too. Many of the presses are entirely volunteer based, subsisting of (at most) small, ad hoc grants and gifted labour from full-time academics. Other presses such as Punctum, Open Book Publishers and Mattering have calculated how much a book costs to publish and they hope to recuperate these costs through a range of revenue sources, rather than one single approach. When, for example, Mattering Press ask an institution to cover an author’s publication costs of £3000 per book, they actually seek £6000 in order to fund another book in future that does not have funding associated with it (Deville 2017, 4). Funding is rarely available on an ongoing basis, and so when it is, presses may seek more a surplus for future publications.

Thinking about finances in this way is representative of more resilient approaches to publishing over ones that aim for financial sustainability. David Ottina

of Open Humanities Press argues (in a separate journal article) that framing scholarly communications in terms of resilience is beneficial to a processual understanding of OA: ‘Talk of sustainable publishing implicitly values static over dynamic, large over small, private over public, monoculture over diversity, and top-down over bottom-up’ (Ottina 2013, 608). Encouraging resilience is a way of promoting a diversity of approaches to publishing through small, grassroots publishers, Ottina argues.

The resilient approach, and its association with smaller, more diverse, grassroots projects, is indicative of the plasticity that OA affords as a concept. This is in contrast to the kinds of large, formalised, commercial and top-down projects that are representative of the governmental approaches to OA, a comparison that will be explored in the next chapter. However, it is important to note that the general concept of OA is important for many presses to build a sense of connection with a movement and to promote cooperation within it. While there may not be a consensus between presses as to what *constitutes* ‘open access’, there is enough appeal to a broader OA movement that gives it force as a general concern for practical purposes, such as cooperation between presses, funding applications and business models. For example, in the third part of the interviews when asked what support they require, many of the presses mentioned a desire for a shared platform or service that presses could utilise for creating, promoting and funding content. The following quote illustrates each press’s desire for *both* cooperation (to build resilience) and plurality:

To not impose some kind of uniformity upon publishers, but to encourage a biodiversity of partners and players in the game. At the same time, yes to the uniformity of certain standards and methods of preservation and distribution. I would love to see uniformity that is helpful in supporting open-access publishers to get their work recognised and distributed and preserved, while at the same time, there is an emphasis on the valuable importance of a diversity of the types of editorial environments for developing work. That would be what I would want to see. (Joy 2017, 15).

So, despite the heterogeneity of practices and values evidenced by the scholar-led presses, there is still a desire from some of them to have a shared service or platform

to build resilience and standardise some features of the publishing process. Scholar-led publishing therefore entails an interplay between collaboration and diversity, something the notion of OA as a boundary object facilitates. The presses position themselves in opposition to competitive practices of the market and for-profit publishing and so there is less of a culture of competition between them (as I will explain further). This collaborative approach facilitates resilient cooperation around the areas of overlap between presses, while simultaneously permitting a diversity of press identities and values.

This heterogeneous understanding of OA is clearer against the backdrop of the wider movement, which is even less homogenous and consensual than the small sample of humanities presses studied here. In this context, disagreements around OA are hegemonic, reflecting a lack of consensus, but also attempts to influence the broader direction of travel. The approaches described in this chapter illustrate that OA is not a fixed concept but is instead representative of a range of practices and values. Each press is united by a commitment to making their research freely available in accordance with their own ethico-political commitments. This is why OA is best conceptualised as operating at the boundaries between numerous communities: the presses combine both a nuanced and individualised approach to publishing OA with a loosely shared notion of the benefits of free access to research that underpins their efforts.

Ethics of care

This final section explores what I feel is the main point of divergence between scholar-led approaches to OA publishing and those provided by the market and governmental policies, and which will frame the analysis of much of the remaining thesis. Among the ethical commitments described by the presses interviewed, the notion of *care* occurs frequently as an important value guiding many of the scholar-led publishing programmes. Joe Deville articulates Mattering Press's interest in the ethics of care:

That is the ethics we draw on in particular, because the press is interested in publishing works in and around Science and Technology Studies, and we have been quite influenced by the work of Annemarie Mol, who

counterposes the logic of care to the logic of calculation. Annemarie Mol in part is also influenced by feminist work on care, and seeing care as where it was, attending to the relationality and the diverse forms of relationality that are being put into play with any practice really. As a Science and Technology Studies focussed publisher, we are also interested in what role non-human actors might play in mediating and shaping those relations of care. That is something that we are also attentive to. (Deville 2017, 2–3)

In the case of Mattering Press, care represents the intimate connection between STS theory and practice, illustrating that many of the presses implement ideas from their academic research into the way each press is run. But care and its related concepts, such as reciprocity, gift-giving and co-dependence, are also helpful for theorising what sets scholar-led presses apart from other presses. The different approaches to and understandings of care are therefore worth exploring in some detail.

The ethics of care is a term deployed in a number of different disciplinary contexts to emphasise the relational and situated nature of ethics. From a feminist perspective, Joan Tronto famously defined care as ‘everything that we do to maintain, continue and repair “our world” so that we can live in it as well as possible’ (Tronto 1993, 103). In opposition to more detached, rational and liberal approaches to ethics, care involves focusing on maintenance and concern for the interdependence and embeddedness of humans and non-humans within their worlds. But the ethical dimension to care, as María Puig de la Bellacasa shows, is not a normative moral obligation but instead concerns ‘thick, impure, involvement in a world where the question of how to care needs to be posed’ (Puig de la Bellacasa 2017, 6). Care, as I understand it, is messy and does not offer a roadmap for an ethico-political way of living; instead, it requires attentiveness to our environments and the collectives in which we participate. Care starts from the understanding that our existence in the world is dependent on others in a way that necessitates a responsible commitment to one another, even if (as per a deconstructive approach) the ethical content of this commitment is not determinable in advance. I develop an understanding of care in relation to publishing throughout the thesis, following Puig de la Bellacasa, that requires a focus on three overlapping (though sometimes contradictory) dimensions: labour/work, affect/affections and ethics/politics (Puig de

la Bellacasa 2017, 5). The scholar-led publishers invoke care in a variety of ways that conform to certain aspects of this tripartite structure.

Publishing is an inherently relational process involving a range of roles from authors, reviewers and editors to copyeditors, typesetters and readers. Writing on their blog, the editors of Mattering Press argue how scholarship is benefitted by ‘open, productive collaboration’ between authors, editors and reviewers (Abrahamsson et al. 2013). In encouraging open dialogue between each role, particularly in the form of non-anonymous peer reviews, the press hopes to encourage a relationship of care between them all. The emphasis on open peer review as an exercise of care and relationship-building is distinct from traditional advocacy around open review (originating largely in the sciences) that argues for its adoption along lines of increased accuracy, consistency and a reduction in delays and expense, or improvements to the paper through a ‘robust exchange of ideas’ (Tattersall 2015). Proponents of open review in the sciences also emphasise the credit that reviewers might receive for signing their review, conforming to the kinds of metricised cultures many of the scholar-led presses here seek to avoid.⁹ Mattering Press is unique, then, in valuing open review for the intrinsic, affective benefits of nurturing a relationship between author and reviewer. This emphasis on discussion is echoed by Media Commons Press’s experiments in openness that ‘privileged dialogue and communication in all of the forms of scholarly communication that we were promoting’ (Fitzpatrick 2017, 2).

In a similar vein, Open Humanities Press cite care-work as important with respect to the labour involved in scholar-led publishing. OHP runs its operations through a decentralised network of working academics all gifting their labour as volunteers. This, they argue, is a way of de-centring ‘waged work from its privileged place in neoliberal society and placing more emphasis on unwaged activities, including different kinds of carework’ (Open Humanities Press 2017, 2). Open Humanities Press provides a structure for academics to divert the labour they already gift to traditional, commercial publishers (also at the expense of their copyright) to scholar-led presses working both in and in the service of their disciplines. Many of the interviewed presses explicitly mention care of the volunteer labour they receive, particularly in not relying on the same volunteers continually (e.g., Joy 2017) and

⁹ See Ross-Hellauer (2017) for a summary of the numerous motivations for open review.

fairly treating ‘those without a direct stake in the distribution of the knowledge itself’ (Deville 2017, 2). This is an extension of caring for the relationships involved in the publishing process. As each press is embedded in its own disciplinary network, they recognise the value of fair treatment and reciprocity – e.g., Open Humanities Press specifically highlights how their knowledge and expertise is shared between other presses rather than kept as a proprietary secret (Open Humanities Press 2017, 3).

In highlighting the relational nature of publishing practices, the employment of care as a guiding principle represents a move towards considerations of the community over the individual. This is a key facet of care, which represents a critique of liberal individualism by emphasising relationality and interdependence over rational individualism and calculation. For Annemarie Mol, care begins with humans as part of *collectives* (families, communities, relationships, etc.) and choice begins with individuals as *customers* who must take responsibility for their own choices (Mol 2008, 14). The logic of choice is therefore detached and disinterested, ignoring the relational contexts in which people are situated (unlike care). Similarly, the logic of choice, in treating everyone the same, disproportionately favours majority groups, the wealthy, and those in a better position ability to influence their outcomes. There is also a normative dimension to the logic of choice, Mol argues, requiring that one *ought* to eat well and exercise, irrespective of one’s situations, and one *should* take care of their own choices of healthcare as an individual operating in the market. Care, on the other hand, focuses on ‘helpful differentiations’ between the groups with which one associates oneself (Mol 2008, 58–59) and lacks the strong normative dimension (as described above).

Mol’s notion of care, referenced by Mattering Press in the above quotation, is useful for understanding the values of the scholar-led OA presses, particularly in contrast to commercial forms of both closed and OA publishing that practice a ‘cookie cutter’ approach described by Punctum (Joy 2017, 4). For example, OA publishing achieved through article-processing charges can promote exactly this kind of state of affairs whereby publishers provide a particular service for a set fee and no more or less. In contrast, scholar-led presses tend to be embedded in their collectives, adopting less of an outcomes-focused practice of scholarly communication and instead attending to the relational context of the work and its production. This is helped by the lack of focus on single, sustainable business models, which affords the flexibility to publish research in non-standardised ways.

Care also extends to the works being published, the materiality of non-human actors in the publishing process. Many of the presses talk of ensuring that the published work is of high quality, either in terms of academic quality through the peer-review and editing processes or in the finished publication through a professional production process. For Meson Press, care of the editing process is needed for academic rigour and for the press to be ‘taken seriously in the academic world’ (Bunz 2017, 1). Open Humanities Press aims to ‘show that it’s perfectly possible to publish books especially open access, maintain high production standards, and achieve a certain level of prestige of the kind one gets from being associated with a traditional legacy print press when doing so’ (Open Humanities Press 2017, 1). Open Book Publishers takes care over the peer review process in order to match the academic quality of ‘the very best university presses’ (Gatti 2017). Care here is synonymous with the kinds of legitimacy and quality expected by researchers of some traditional presses, particularly university presses.¹⁰

Despite positioning themselves in opposition to many aspects of traditional publishing, a number of the presses referred to university press publishing as influential. Alongside Open Book Publishers referencing Cambridge University Press as a standard for quality, some of the presses explicitly valued the university press model for its academic oversight and ability to publish without pure commercial concerns. Chris Land of Mayfly Books values the ‘strange, edgy, intermediary situation of the university presses’, particularly smaller ones, over the ‘bigger commercial’ university presses such as Oxford and Cambridge and those in the US. Smaller university presses are not simply led by commercial concerns¹¹ and, as such, offer a space for publishing based on the logic of care over that of choice. This is perhaps why many of the presses speak favourably of university presses – Punctum and Mayfly Books both sought (unsuccessfully) to launch as formally affiliated presses with a university press designation (Joy 2017; Land 2017), while Open Humanities Press partnered with Michigan University Press for the first five years of its existence.

¹⁰ Even if this reputation for high-standards in the ‘best university presses’ is not always well-deserved, as the Cambridge University Press scandal around censorship of articles critical of the Chinese government shows (M. Kennedy and Phillips 2017).

¹¹ This is true historically, at least. As the opening chapter of this thesis shows, university presses are increasingly seeing their subsidies reduced or withdrawn from their host institutions, and many have had to become self-sufficient as a result.

As a scholar-led university press, Goldsmiths Press was founded to regenerate ‘the traditions of the university press’ (Kember 2017, 1). It is not immediately apparent what Kember means by this but in a separate talk to launch Goldsmiths Press she refers to the ‘long tradition of publishing stuff that messes up the boundaries of arts and humanities’ (Kember 2016 at 24.50). Similarly, Chris Land hoped to relaunch the University of Leicester Press in order to leverage institutional resources and keep the press ‘under academic leadership within the university rather than having it as a kind of arm’s length commercial spin-off’ (Land 2017, 2). University presses can therefore afford to publish in ways that are not concerned with commercial returns, which in turn allows experimentation, the ‘strange’ and ‘edgy’ and the kinds of publications that are valued purely for scholarly reasons.

This ties neatly with the final usage of care I want to reference from the interviews, that of Punctum’s guiding principle of ‘care of the self’. Borrowing from the title of volume three of Foucault’s *The History of Sexuality*, Eileen Joy cites ‘care of the self’ as one way of fostering the kinds of experimentation that has ‘no regard whatsoever for outcomes or applications’ (Joy 2017, 4). Foucault’s exploration of care of the self relates to the idea that self-care, in the form of introspection, daily regimens, exercises, etc., was a foundational moral precept in Ancient Greece (Foucault 1984). Though it may appear highly individualistic, when compared to those understandings of care explored so far, Foucault explains that care finds ‘ready support in the whole bundle of customary relations of kinship, friendship, and obligation’ (Foucault 1984, 52–53). Care of the self was inherently a community-based exercise for the ancients, Foucault shows, and one had a right to receive guidance and counselling from others.

For Eileen Joy of Punctum Books, focusing on care of the self is a method of moving beyond mere critique and towards a transformation of the structures that force research into certain externally configured formats:

Punctum’s guiding principles are that there is no way to know what the future of research is, without having a kind of open door that allows in the chimeric, the mad, the deviant, the improbable, the unforeseen and unanticipated modes. We shouldn’t know in advance what we are doing. With every book proposal, when publishers ask you to propose a book, they have a format.

They want you to know at the beginning where you are going to end up. They want you to say at the outset when you do a grant proposal, what the outcome will be. Everyone loathes that part of a grant proposal because they don't know the outcome of their research yet, but if they do not say they do know, they won't get the money. Therefore Punctum feels that publishing is an art of care of the self, of the author, of their ideas, of their work. (Joy 2017, 4).

Punctum seeks to provide a space for authors to explore their ideas for their intrinsic worth, rather than how they conform to certain expected 'outcomes'. Care here relates to experimentation and the absence of a need to conform, allowing authors to care solely for their research process rather than anything extraneous to it.

I have illustrated a number of different usages of care cited by the interviewed presses, particularly those relating to affect, ethics and labour, and how an understanding of care helps elucidate the discourse and practices of each press. Though the various usages of the term come from different perspectives and disciplinary traditions, there is a thread running through each that emphasises the relational and collective aspects of subjectivity and how this relates to the publishing process. Care offers a way to work through issues around labour, authorship, commercialism and conservatism in publishing and research assessment. Scholar-led publishing is a way of reintroducing care to the publishing process through the freedom it affords to experimentation and non-traditional approaches to scholarship. This freedom also lends itself to cooperation over competition and a sense of the collective over individualism. These aspects in particular will distinguish scholar-led publishing from both traditional publishing and the move to OA as represented by the governmental policies.

Scholar-led publishing – alternative forms of OA

Is it possible to theorise the scholar-led presses as an alternative form of OA? To an extent, yes, scholar-led publishers seeks to both resist and critique dominant hegemonic publishing assumptions and practices, each based on an open approach. They are motivated by the desire to experiment with values and practices not

represented or afforded by the current publishing industry, both as resistance to marketised publishing and as exploring publishing based on different values altogether. In particular, these different values are well illustrated by the scholar-led press commitment to *care* in various forms: relational approaches to publishing that foreground embeddedness and collectivisation in the service of broader ethico-political aims. Instead of conceptualising the presses as an alternative *form* of OA, then, it might be better to focus on *forms* of OA. The governance and ownership of scholarly presses by scholars themselves does not entail a particular kind of publishing practice but allows each press to explore different practices through alternative forms of organisation.

These alternatives all represent the understanding of OA as a boundary object, something unique to a community of practice and intimately connected to their own ways of working. Such a conception facilitates experimentation and nuanced forms of openness through which decisions are taken with respect to disciplinary, ethical or practical commitments. OA is not adhered to dogmatically but because it enables other kinds of praxis underpinned by freely accessible research. This praxis might be an extension of editors' own scholarly work, an explicitly political or ethical intervention or other experimental way of working. OA is not always the primary motivator, then, but something allowing presses to think through the conventions associated with how research is disseminated. But as a boundary object, OA also offers a connection to a movement and solidarity with other presses. The presses do not operate entirely alone and many refer to self-reliance and collective approaches to publishing that are facilitated by this connection to an OA movement.

We can think of scholar-led publishing in some sense as a prefigurative politics that seeks to enact the kinds of institutional changes many of the presses wish to see. Rather than attempting to change the publishing industry merely through discursive or confrontational means, the presses instead perform this change by representing something completely different based on values of care. In this sense, caring for the relationships involved in the publishing process is not just an ethical principle but a deeply political act that enacts the world each press hopes to bring about. Scholar-led publishing takes on a dual role of both critique and the constructing of alternatives to the kinds of organisation that presses resist. OA publishers exists as Open Humanities Press describe above, in order to 'create more

space for radically different, conflicting, even incommensurable positions within the larger movement.’ Scholar-led presses therefore represent a series of critical struggles based in part on experimentation, rather than on pre-decided models to be implemented.

But experimentation into alternatives also entails precarity. Scholar-led presses are staffed by working academics, or academics who have left the university in order to focus on publishing (such as Open Book Publishers and Punctum Books), and their publishing projects reflect decisions taken about when to prioritise sustainability over experimentation. A prefigurative approach to publishing clearly cannot escape considerations of longevity and sustainability, especially when many of the presses try to act in opposition to the logic of commercialisation that is so pervasive across all areas of society. To this extent, scholar-led publishing is beholden to many of the structures of power that the presses themselves are resisting, rather than representative of a completely distinct form of organisation. For example, the presses report needing to make compromises around the services used, such as Amazon and Ingram Books (as shown), as more progressive and ethical alternatives do not have the convenience or reach. In addition, presses also reported relying on the ‘prestige economy’ in order to achieve legitimacy and attract more authors. This is because of the cultures of prestige that funding bodies and hiring committees reflect when making their decisions. Such practices represent practical tactics and political decisions that permit freedom in other areas. Scholar-led presses may be intellectually positioned against competition but, in practice, they end up competing for scarce resources such as funding, authors and other indicators of prestige.

So, the presses analysed here represent something of a counter-hegemonic bloc of publishers, each governed by academics in the service of various commitments to resistance and exploration of alternatives to the traditional publishing industry. They cannot entirely avoid the demands of traditional publishing and instead make choices about how and when to usurp, resist or conform to them, often according to a logic of care that considers the relational aspects of subjectivity to be paramount. Nonetheless, scholar ownership and governance at least afford the potential for explorations into alternative modes of organisation, even if these are ephemeral, precarious and in many ways beholden to the standards of the market.

Keeping this picture in mind, the next chapter takes a broader perspective on scholar-led publishing, situating it against both the governmental policies and the OA movement in order to understand their implications. From here, it should become clearer what the radical possibilities of OA are for the humanities.

Chapter 5. Choice and care: a critical comparison of governmental and scholar-led approaches to OA

Introduction

In Chapters 3 and 4 I analysed two distinct examples of open access (OA) that represent different value systems and understandings of what open access is or could be. The scholar-led presses described in the previous chapter represent a diverse ecosystem of small non-commercial presses that publish a range of OA books, journals and experimental work in the humanities. The UK governmental policy framework, on the other hand, comprises two main policy instruments: firstly, the HEFCE policy mandates that all research submitted to the Research Excellence Framework (REF) should be deposited into institutional/subject repositories and released to the public in accordance with certain publisher embargos; secondly, the RCUK policy requires all RCUK-funded researchers to, where possible, publish their work in an OA (or hybrid) journal, often following the payment of an article-processing charge to the journal.

There are significant differences between the top-down policy vision for open access and the open projects practiced by the scholar-led presses. While it would not be correct to suggest that the scholar-led presses form a coherent ideological unit, there are still a number of common themes and ideas that are foregrounded in their praxis (as the previous chapter showed). Conversely, despite the *prima facies* differences between them, the two governmental policies originate in the UK government's same neoliberal thinking that prioritises both market solutions and policies that are measurable according to free market principles. Taking care to not set up too much of a dichotomous and oppositional relationship to the analysis, this chapter presents a comparison of the two approaches to OA explored so far. This will involve an exploration of how their values differ, how OA

is understood and treated in each context, and how each approach might relate to the OA in the humanities more generally.

OA, as has been shown so far, exists in an undecidable space, subject to a range of hegemonic interventions from different communities. It should now become clearer how the flexibility of the concept of OA allows it to be shaped and appropriated by various communities and regulatory agencies in the service of different political ends. The governmental policies reflect a journey from Point A to Point B, starting from a pragmatic but limited version of OA to a more systemic, holistic OA publishing ecosystem that reflects the practices of scientists more than humanities researchers and prioritises business over engaging with progressive and experimental alternatives. The UK government's understanding of OA prioritises the concerns of powerful stakeholders in order to promote a system of freely accessible research that these stakeholders deem acceptable. The government's teleological understanding of OA is in contrast to the scholar-led presses analysed, for whom OA is more indeterminate, processual and closely connected to their individual communities and working practices. In presenting a comparative analysis of the two, I hope to make explicit how top-down and grassroots forms of OA entail different states of affairs that impact on the humanities in unique ways. These differences are due in a large part to the scholar-led presses being embedded in and governed by their own communities, despite the concerns about sustainability that this entails. This is unlike the governmental policy framework that looks to the market for its sustainability but is consequently restricted to the governance by the private sector, rather than researchers. This chapter draws out these differences and situates scholar-led vs. policy-based forms of OA against the backdrop of the wider OA movement.

Logics of choice and care

Scholar-led publishers are embedded in their disciplinary networks, reflecting a nuanced publishing praxis that is sensitive to the working practices of particular scholarly communities. This is because they tend to be smaller and, though not exclusively, more focused on a smaller range of subject areas close to their own expertise. The governmental policies, on the other hand, need to consider a broad range of 'stakeholders', particularly those wielding financial power. In doing so, the needs of researchers – particularly those from disciplines without extensive grant

funding – are framed only in compliance terms in accordance with how much they will tolerate. The OA policies adopt a punitive approach whereas the scholar-led presses see themselves as facilitating forms of OA that are experimental and/or emancipatory from the assumptions and structures of traditional publishing. Scholar-led presses therefore attempt to return control of publishing practices to the researchers themselves in order to respond to the concerns of their constituents. As Open Humanities Press argue:

[R]ather than telling these different people exactly how they are to publish their work, say, by imposing one particular publishing model or one specific platform on them all, OHP is endeavouring to work with them to develop the means of doing so that they themselves consider to be most appropriate for their particular project, context, specialism, field or community. OHP is thus trying to relate to what scholars want, rather than to what their institutions, libraries and funders want, as is the case with many government and research council-funded open access initiatives. (Open Humanities Press 2017, 3).

This is representative of a cooperative approach to OA, rather than one based in the market and on competition. OHP references the academic freedom implicit in gearing their practices towards ‘what scholars want’ rather than what their institutions require of them. As a network of publishers embedded in the practices of humanities researchers, the scholar-led publishers can claim to more closely represent academic freedom to publish however they choose. This freedom is positioned in contrast to mandates and policies that seek to coerce researchers to publish in ways dictated by governments, funders and institutions.

OA has a complicated relationship with academic freedom, especially as far as the humanities are concerned. Many objections to OA from humanities researchers stem from concerns over mandates and their detrimental impact on academic freedom (e.g., Kirby 2012; Mandler 2014). OA mandates, particularly Gold mandates as Peter Mandler argues, have the potential to give ‘managers the final say in what and where academics publish’ by introducing a financial qualification to the publishing process (Mandler 2014, 168). Critics of this kind of OA tend to favour the green route that seeks to preserve a researcher’s right to publish wherever they choose by respecting publisher-set embargos on research. The

green route also avoids the potential trappings of a ‘pay-to-say’ culture that requires researchers to pay APCs to publish in particular journals. However, despite their attempts to mitigate restrictions on academic freedom to publish, neither of the OA policies avoid the fact that mandates for OA can only work if they coerce researchers into performing a particular action.

The idea of academic freedom reflected in the governmental policies was theorised in Chapter 3 according to a logic of choice, via the work of Annemarie Mol, which promotes individual autonomy within the market as the arbiter of ethical decision making. Yet, as OHP allude to above, the freedom to publish is largely determined by institutional commitments and requirements – publishing is not something over which academics have full control. Academic publications confer a strong degree of informally-defined prestige and quality that is inextricably linked to the careers of academics. The REF itself reinforces this by imposing criteria (formally defined or otherwise) that researchers should meet in their publications¹². Academics are therefore free to choose where to publish only inasmuch as their choices conform to the requirements of funders and universities. But this freedom is still presented in accordance with the logic of choice: it is your responsibility to decide where to publish in the way that conforms to institutional requirements. As Mol explains, the logic of choice treats subjects as individuals who are purely responsible for their own choices in the market (Mol 2008, 80).

The article-processing charge (associated with the RCUK policy) is a noteworthy example of the logic of choice in open access publishing. The fee itself is fixed and indicates what may be included (peer review, typesetting, etc.) or excluded (subject editing, copyediting, etc.) in the services provided. It is purely transactional in nature and defines what is and is not offered to the author. The author can either choose the OA journal that is right for their needs or submit to a different publication, perhaps one with a lower APC but fewer added services. This would be the case if universities start instructing their researchers to publish in journals with less expensive APCs. In this situation, the ‘choices’ on offer would be delegated upwards to university administrators looking to save money through exercising market choice. As Stuart Lawson writes: ‘When neoliberalism is understood as a

¹² For a discussion on the relationship between the REF and academic autonomy, see Smith, Ward and House (2011).

political project to enforce market logic and to actively construct the conditions in which market-like transactions can occur, the APC model emerges as the single funding mechanism for scholarly publications that most closely fits this goal' (Lawson Forthcoming, 176). The APC is therefore a stark example of this transactional approach to OA based on choice and market participation.

Furthermore, although the repository-based HEFCE policy offers the researcher *less* choice around how to make their research OA, it is still justified in accordance with the market logic of choice, i.e., that their academic freedom to choose where to publish should be preserved above all else. This means that humanities researchers must make do with a restricted form of OA, subject to embargoes and un-formatted/copyedited documents in repositories, in order to allow them to continue to publish in subscription journals. Both policies are justified in accordance with the logic of choice in order to maintain the status quo. Opposition to the policies, much like opposition to neoliberal interventions in general, is framed by governments as opposition to academic freedom, specifically where freedom is understood solely as *economic* freedom.

In contrast to the governmental logic of choice, the previous chapter theorised scholar-led publishing with respect to the concept of care in various forms. Many of the presses explicitly mentioned the ethics of care as a central concern of their publishing practices and many more implicitly displayed a commitment to care through their actions rooted in gift-giving and generosity. Care is relational and community-focused, rather than being rooted in individual responsibility and outcomes. A care-full approach to publishing is therefore one that attends to and takes responsibility for the web of relations involved in the publishing process: the author, the editors, the production processes, how feedback is communicated, the materiality of the work, and so on. Important to this conception is how presses interact with each other as *partners* rather than competitors, which fosters mutual reliance and support between each other as a way of achieving resilience in an industry geared towards sustainable, profitable business models. Implicit in the scholar-led approach to publishing-as-care is the idea that many traditional forms of publishing do not care for these relational aspects and are instead focused on the outcomes of individual choices made by authors who act as rational participants in the market. Commercial publishing's emphasis on outcomes takes the focus away from the processes and relations involved in publishing, particularly who provides

the labour, how well treated they are, and how responsive their processes are to individual situations. In contrast, scholar-led publishers demonstrate a keen awareness of the detrimental impact that commercial publishing has on these relationships. They consequently distinguish themselves through a presence within and for their communities.

Complicating the picture

It is tempting to distinguish the OA policies from the scholar-led presses as neatly reflective of the logic of choice versus the logic of care, but this dichotomy would not tell the full story. The logic of care is useful as a continuum in which to situate the views and practices of each approach, but does not apply to the policies and the presses in such a neat, oppositional way. Each approach is reflective of various degrees of care and choice. For example, some of the presses describe the closures entailed in day-to-day publishing, particularly around utilising for-profit services such as Amazon, but also in the choices made around prestige and the REF. These closures are typical of a logic of choice that, as Annemarie Mol describes, ‘draws a limit’ around what is on offer (Mol 2008, 18). Pragmatic decisions about when to appeal to institutional ideas of research quality, when to use commercial services, and so on, all conform to a logic of choice. These choices represent a kind of ethical responsibility to ‘make good cuts’, as Sarah Kember and Joanna Zylińska argue, ‘without drowning us in the process’ (Kember and Zylińska 2012, 168). Only through enacting these closures or cuts, and recognising that choices need to be made, can the scholar-led presses actually get things done (without ‘drowning in the process’). It is better, therefore, to recognise care/choice as a continuum or guiding principle rather than a concept describing all the actions of scholar-led publishers.

Similarly, much of the labour for conforming with the governmental policies is provided by libraries in an open-ended, care-based way, rather than according to the logic of choice and limits so far described. The additional labour for the HEFCE policy was theorised in Chapter 3 as a form of invisible work: labour that is taken-for-granted and ‘relegated to a background of expectation’ (Star and Strauss 1999, 15). Librarians are forced to assume more of the responsibilities for the additional burden of training and assistance, alongside their other tasks. This labour is open-ended and relational but, because of this, can be relegated by administrators to work

that is not ‘legitimate, individuated and traceable across settings’ (Star and Strauss 1999, 17). This is one of the drawbacks of care-work as a form of labour – it becomes invisible when not valued in an institutional setting.

Librarianship is positioned in society as a feminised profession, despite the disproportionate presence of men in leadership roles (Record and Green 2008). Such professions, as Kim England argues, typically reflect the kinds of work grounded in care and ‘labours of love’ over those based in waged work. England argues:

This gendering of work has its ideological and historical roots in the social and spatial separation of waged work from social reproduction. ‘Work’ became constituted as ‘economically productive’ waged-labour that took place outside the home. Housekeeping, caring for family members and other ‘domestic’ activities became non-marketized ‘labours of love’ primarily associated within the private sphere of family and home, and assumed to be primarily the responsibility of wives and mothers. The construction of a socio-spatial boundary separating ‘work’-production-public from care-reproduction-private devalues and obscures activities defined as ‘women’s work’ (England 2010, 133).

Librarianship is frequently characterised in this way. Roxanne Shirazi describes some of the features that define librarianship such as emotional and reproductive labour, and how librarians are positioned as operating in the service of scholars rather than alongside them as equals. Shirazi characterises this as work that ‘reproduces the academy’ but is ‘reduced to (and devalued as) “service”’ (Shirazi 2014).

The OA policies, particularly the HEFCE policy, reflect this understanding of librarianship as feminised, service-based and focused on care-work. Librarians are forced to take on the invisible work for the policies and juggle or abandon their other commitments, including commitments to alternative avenues for OA, as one of the librarians reported in Chapter 3. Against the backdrop of static budgets and the de-funding of public higher education in the UK, librarians are therefore required to do ‘more with less’, a commonly-used phrase since the financial crisis of 2008. This forces them into a practice of resilience, which may mean receiving lower salaries, working longer hours or assuming additional responsibilities in order to make up the

shortfall. The labour for the OA policies reflects the negative aspects of care-work as a kind of resilience in an institutional setting, which allows universities to take advantage of the invisible work undertaken by librarians.

The librarian April Hathcock discusses the prevalence of resilience narratives in the library community and the way in which such narratives lead to tacit acceptance of lower salaries and tougher conditions, and especially how this negatively impacts on diversity within the US library profession. Hathcock claims: ‘we can’t continue to try to make do with nothing. Our resilience is doing us no favors’ (Hathcock 2017). The feminised positioning of librarianship and the care-work it requires forces many librarians to take on additional duties in the name of resilience, despite that this additional work often goes unremunerated and unrecognised. The governmental OA policies are an example of the resilience required for such additional care-work, which can negatively impact on the working conditions of those providing the infrastructure, training and support for their implementation. Resilience actually obfuscates the labour cost of OA, as the work here is invisible in the university system.

The scholar-led publishers, on the other hand, practise forms of resilience and gifting their labour in order to highlight the labour that academics give to commercial publishers in the service of traditional publishing. Scholar-led presses are primarily run by working academics who may already gift their labour to commercial publishers for writing, editing, reviewing and proofreading. They thus divert this labour to their own projects, making the labour visible in a way that creates the conditions of possibility for other researchers to do the same. Mattering Press discusses OA in terms of opening up ‘the black box of academic publishing’ (Abrahamsson et al. 2013), while Open Book Publishers release a breakdown of their costs as a way of practicing financial transparency and accountability (Gatti 2015). In a *Triple C* article, David Ottina of Open Humanities Press argues that the frame of resilience leads to a ‘discussion of public and community provision of communications infrastructure’, whereas talk of ‘sustainability’ leads to privatisation and a focus on business models. Resilience reminds us, Ottina argues, that scholars are ‘continually creating and renewing what it means to engage in scholarship’ (Ottina 2013, 609).

Scholar-led publishing and policy-based OA therefore emphasise different versions of resilience and care grounded in versions of both neoliberal and

emancipatory politics. On the one hand, resilience narratives within public universities only serve to highlight the defunding of higher education in the name of austerity. For example, Jonathan Joseph argues that resilience is quite a ‘shallow’ concept that ‘fits extremely well’ in the environment of neoliberal governmentality through its stress on ‘heightened self-awareness, reflexivity and responsibility’ (Joseph 2013, 51). This is perhaps illustrated by scholar-led publishers’ reliance on gifted editorial and production labour, which would be salaried (or at least remunerated) in a traditional book publishing house. Resilience in this instance appears to be in opposition to care for the labour involved in the publishing process, as it requires (something noted by the scholar-led presses in the previous chapter).

Yet, in the absence of sustainable funding, the reliance on volunteer labour is the price that scholar-led presses pay opposing the marketisation of publishing. The resilience practiced by the scholar-led presses is grounded in a resistance to neoliberalism in order to enact a new social imaginary grounded in care and the gift, which works towards a future in which these kinds of initiatives are financed in other less problematic and care-based ways. Where, for example, Goldsmiths Press takes the route of ensuring a more self-sustainable business approach through revenue generation, this results in a somewhat watered-down version of green open access for the books they publish (Kember 2017, 3), presumably out of fear of lost revenues if the final digital version is immediately available. But again, decisions need to be made: resilience, care and related concepts are complicated and only take on a politically progressive role in the service of specific political articulations and cuts, as the scholar-led press interviews illustrate.

Derrida is helpful for developing this idea. The foregrounding of issues such as care and gift-work produces, as Derrida argues, an asymmetrical relationship between (care)giver and receiver that results in a form of domination (‘violence’) over the recipient (Derrida 1992b, 147). In an exploration of the politics of care in the work of Derrida, Richard Ganis argues: ‘For Derrida, care has to be asymmetrical, non-reciprocal. Anything less would result in a violence in the regimes of hospitable reciprocity, precisely because in controlling the threshold, borders and terms of invitation, the host retains mastery over the *arrivant*’ (Ganis 2011, 46). This means that caregiving contains a natural power imbalance such that a truly symmetrical relationship between giver and receiver is impossible and so

constantly requires re-assessment and re-justification in order to avoid the giver continually imposing order on the receiver.

Indeed, as many have argued, rather than gifted labour acting *in opposition* to neoliberal publishing practices, it may actually reinforce them in their reliance on volunteers rather than paid labour. As Tiziana Terranova argues, the practices of gifted labour are ‘fundamental’ to late capitalism as a whole, rather than acting in opposition or outside of it: ‘free labour is a desire of labour immanent to late capitalism, and late capitalism is the field which both sustains *and* exhausts it’ (Terranova 2004, 94). Given this, Terranova argues, it is ‘impossible to separate’ internet cultures founded on gifted labour (in whatever political context) from late capitalism to the extent that the latter always encapsulates the former. This means that ‘the internet has always simultaneously been a gift economy *and* an advanced capitalist economy’ (ibid), meaning that gifted labour actually sustains neoliberalism rather than acts in opposition to or outside of it.

Terranova presupposes here that gifted labour is always a condition of late-capitalism in all circumstances, whereas I have argued throughout the thesis (following Mouffe’s reading of Derrida) that such claims cannot be made as the political exists in an ‘undecidable’ terrain (Mouffe 1996, 2). Gary Hall makes this point explicitly about various understandings (including Terranova’s) of the politics of the internet, and of OA, that rely on traditional or dialectical understandings of the political that preclude thinking beyond such predefined categories and an ‘ethical opening to the future’ (Hall 2008, 195). Although there may be a problem with gifted labour from both the perspective of the giver and receiver, it does not follow that OA projects should shun their ethical potential – indeed, a responsible politics would require the opposite. As the scholar-led presses display and describe, forms of care, gift-giving and resilience may allow them to think through the conditions imposed by neoliberalism towards something more emancipatory.

So, values of care, ‘the gift’ and resilience are therefore worth instilling in alternative forms of OA for the humanities; they just need adequate articulation and justification. Providing they are accurately characterised, deployed and continually reassessed, it is possible to foreground care and relational approaches over neoliberal logics of choice and the competition and individualism they promote. These characteristics of care-based approaches emphasise a different form of organisation in opposition to market conditions. A focus on care highlights the relationships

involved in publishing, both inside and outside the academy, and promotes experimentation and diversity by tailoring the publishing process to the author and their work. Care also helps understand the labour involved in publishing, both material and immaterial, and provides a rationale for the better treatment of all those involved in the publishing supply chain, from editors, authors and reviewers, to proof-readers, typesetters and cover designers. Indeed, care would be a beneficial value for governmental policymakers to think about when creating OA policies, given the additional labour required to support them on top of the labour academics already provide to traditional publishers.

Scholar-led presses, governmental policies and the broader OA movement

But how do the two forms of OA analysed here relate to the broader ‘movement’ for open access to scholarly literature? Rather than framing the differences between scholar-led and governmental approaches to OA in binary/oppositional terms, a better way would be in terms discussed earlier of OA as a series of ‘critical struggles’ akin, as Adema and Hall argue (citing Etienne Balibar), to the development of democracy as a ‘permanent struggle for democratisation’ (Adema and Hall 2013, 34). In order to promote plurality, critical resistance and self-reflection around scholarly communication, OA (as I have argued so far) should be viewed not as a homogenous project with a particular understanding or definition that seeks to replace the current publishing system *in toto*. This is how the RCUK and HEFCE policies each separately understand open access, as something to be mandated and conformed with in the hope of achieving a rational consensus between all stakeholders over the most pragmatic route forward for a new system of publishing. OA is taken as an end point, rather than a catalyst for critical changes (as the scholar-led presses consider it).

The attempt at consensus-building is based on a mistaken liberal assumption that such a consensus can be achieved, a position associated with Habermas’ conception of deliberative democracy. Yet I have argued so far that politics necessarily implies conflict, and any attempt at consensus building will be temporary at best. Chantal Mouffe describes the impossibility of a rational consensus ‘without

exclusion', putting forward an alternative understanding of politics based on what she terms agonistics: 'According to the accepted view, the public space is the terrain where one aims at creating a consensus. For the agonistic approach, on the contrary, the public space is where conflicting points of view are confronted without any possibility of a final reconciliation' (Mouffe 2013, 92). The consequence of the agonistic approach is that the design of political institutions looks quite different whether one is working to promote consensus or agonistic pluralism. Consensus-building will always lead to forms of exclusion, particularly of marginalised voices and identities. This is the case for consensus-building approaches to OA, particularly as they relate to disciplines in the humanities whose publication practices do not follow the dominant way of doing things. Approaches to OA need to promote these kinds of differences rather than neutralise them into a false consensus.

The government and scholar-led approaches to OA are therefore rooted in different cultures. Scholar-led presses are more overtly interested in disrupting the status quo of publishing in ways tied with their political, ethical and disciplinary commitments. Understandings of openness are not necessarily consensual across these presses but are in various ways embedded in all their practices. The governmental policies, on the other hand, represent a dominant vision for OA that strives for a consensus between all stakeholders but ends up appeasing those with the most power. This ultimately achieves a form of OA that is tolerable rather than one that engages with broader motivations from different scholarly communities and groups. This situation is compounded by the fact that the business practices of the more powerful stakeholders (i.e., commercial publishers) are a significant motivator of the OA movement, and so the policies end up reinforcing the power of commercial publishers while sidestepping their detrimental impact on research dissemination.

For some OA advocates, such as Stuart Lawson, the HEFCE policy's 'very tangible benefits' of more freely-accessible research represents a tolerable state of affairs (Lawson Forthcoming, 174). He writes:

On the one hand, the motivation behind the [HEFCE] policy can be viewed as neoliberal, but on the other hand, the actual end result of the policy is in alignment with the aims of social justice-driven open access advocates. So

this judgement depends on the question of whether to focus on actual results, or on the intentions behind them. (Lawson Forthcoming, 177–78).

Not only am I unconvinced that the results of the HEFCE policy will promote ‘social justice’ for all those impacted by it (especially when considering those maintaining the infrastructures and compliance processes for the policy), I would argue that the focus on measurable outcomes over cultures actually rehearses the language of neoliberalism that Lawson seeks to resist. In fact, from interviewing Ben Johnson it is clear that HEFCE were sensitive to the complexity of the issue and, given the government’s desire for an OA component to the REF, they managed a complex range of stakeholders with the best of intentions given their restraints. The question is not whether the policy is a result of neoliberal policymaking (as it clearly is) but whether the resulting freely accessible research is worth the upheaval on behalf of researchers, librarians, publishers and others. I do not think that it is worth the upheaval, especially as it could have the opposite of its intended effect by actively deterring researchers from critically examining their publishing practices.

One of the main criticisms I made in Chapter 3 about the government policies is the distinct possibility that researchers, who will first encounter OA through the policy framework, will be reticent to explore and embrace open practices of the kind practiced by the scholar-led presses. OA will appear as either something that is not *for* humanities researchers, as the RCUK policy implies, or as a bureaucratic exercise to be complied with, as per the HEFCE policy. The REF is already loathed by academics and so tying OA to an exercise of audit and compliance will associate the former with the latter. There is little in the policy framework to encourage an awareness of why OA is a good thing and how it can relate to a critical reassessment of scholarly communications more generally. Irrespective of the amount of freely accessible research papers the policy makes available, which it certainly will do, the policy framework will likely change the cultures of publishing for the worse, forcing university staff to take on more unvalued, invisible labour while discouraging researchers from exploring alternative forms of publishing or critically assessing their own publishing practices.

Scholar-led publishing as counter-hegemonic challenge

Nevertheless, if the policies have the potential to actively deter researchers from exploring critical forms of OA, how might the scholar-led presses impact on the OA movement? Scholar-led publishing is a niche activity that operates at the margins; it is not immediately clear how scholar-led presses could affect the trajectory of OA or scholarly communications, or even if this is desirable. Certainly, many of the presses are ephemeral and publish infrequently, rather than focusing on permanence or a regular, well-branded publishing programme. Perhaps it is possible to frame the influence of scholar-led publishing as a whole in terms of a ‘counter-hegemonic challenge’ to the dominant publishing culture (Mouffe 2013, 91). We have already seen from Eileen Joy that scholar-led presses attempt to move beyond mere critique into ‘a transformation of the actual systems within which we work’ (Joy 2017, 4). Their existence is itself an example of pushing back against the dominant cultures of OA, and of publishing more broadly, through both practice-based and discursive means. And though the presses are not united by any specific philosophy or approach, they are best theorised as embodying critique of the current systems of publishing in the humanities.

Scholar-led publishers form a counter-hegemonic challenge to current the dominant modes of publishing in a similar way to other grassroots artistic and cultural communities. In an essay entitled ‘Agonistic Politics and Artistic Practices’, Mouffe describes the various practices and discourses employed by artists to change the dominant conception of reality, what Gramsci termed the ‘common sense’ (Mouffe 2013, 88). Through a series of cultural and artistic (not traditionally ‘political’) practices, counter-hegemonic interventions aim to create the possibility of new subjectivities in civil society. Mouffe uses the example of Alfredo Jaar’s artistic work that poses simple questions in public places in order to ‘trigger reflections that will arouse discontent with the current state of things’ (Mouffe 2013, 95). As an ‘aesthetics of resistance’, Mouffe highlights Jaar’s work (and the presence of subversive art more generally) for its affective potential in constructing new forms of subjectivity based on positing alternatives and new possibilities. I would like to argue that it is possible to consider scholar-led publishing in a similar way.

The affective potential of disruptive publishing practices is one way in which the scholar-led presses unsettle dominant ideas around publishing and its associated

practices. Making publications openly available, born-digital and not-for-profit is one way of highlighting why these ideas are subversive and why the scholar-led presses felt the need to take responsibility for publishing themselves. We can thus think of scholar-led publishing, following Mouffe, as a series of ‘counter-hegemonic interventions whose objective is to disrupt the smooth image that corporate capitalism tries to spread’ (Mouffe 2013, 98). Scholar-led presses represent the existence of alternatives that can resist commercialised publishing and can point to new forms of organisation. Coupled with traditional discursive forms of advocacy, it is clear how such a strategy could begin to change the common sense. One of the main reasons I argue that the government policies will not have this effect is because they are based in compliance and mandates, rather than in encouraging engagement through new forms of praxis. In fact, the policies’ affective potential might actually be the feature of the policies that works against the adoption of critical publishing practices through the association that OA is punitive rather than based in freedom.

But Mouffe also discusses how counter-hegemonic strategies need to engage with – not withdraw from – the institutions that maintain the dominant hegemony. Withdrawing from institutional attachments implies that art and culture can only be made sense of *outside* the institutional context and ignores the ‘multiplicity of avenues that are open for political engagement’ (Mouffe 2013, 100). In the case of scholar-led presses, this means employing various strategies to engage with the university, funders and governments to undermine the dominant ideological framework. A good example of this is Goldsmiths Press which operates within the university and in the service of Goldsmiths’ theoretical and artistic commitments (Kember 2017, 1). Many of the presses interviewed had a positive view of university presses and the need to bring publication practices *inside* the university as a way of reclaiming them from commercial publishers. This is despite the university’s complicity in ‘commercialisation, standardisation and audit’, as Sarah Kember describes (Kember 2017, 1).

However, because scholar-led presses do not form a coherent, unified whole, their influence over the broader OA movement could be limited. This is a feature of decentralised networks that do not operate under the same rubric, even if they share a common standpoint of resistance. Strategies for collective action and ways for presses to have institutional influence would be necessary to explore the full potential of scholar-led publishing, maybe through collaboration with other forms of

publishing based in libraries, university presses, artistic communities and other institutions. This is because the scholar-led presses are small and unable to influence much on their own, especially given the time constraints of working academics (but also of librarians, publishers and others). Collectively, the presses could explore areas of shared interest and strategies to cultivate them, something the conclusion of this thesis will consider.

The long-term influence of the presses might depend more on the fact that they are embedded within their disciplinary communities, rather than from any particular commitment to ‘open access’, which is not always their main concern. But does ‘influence’ also entail the need for scholar-led presses to participate in the kinds of prestige cultures that they implicitly or explicitly oppose? In order for the presses to reflect quality they have to publish and be associated with well renowned scholars in their field. This was a strategy displayed by many of the presses interviewed (though not all of them), such as Mattering and Open Humanities Press who each have advisory boards of notable figures in their fields. Although we have already seen that part of politics means taking certain decisions in an undecidable terrain, many of which the presses felt ‘uncomfortable’ with, there is also a danger that doing so may legitimise and reaffirm the current prestige cultures that REF promotes. The very thing that may attract an author to publish with a scholar-led press may be the thing that perpetuates the kinds of cultures to which they are opposed. There is a danger, then, that scholar-led publishing could only make an impact on scholarly publishing if it plays by the rules of traditional publishing. This would nullify much of its radical potential and would represent a barrier to their ability to represent an alternative way forward. The more that scholar-led publishers are forced to adopt the processes of traditional publishers, and abide by their rules, the greater the chance of their being subsumed by the expectations of traditional publishing. There is a trade-off, then, between politics and sustainability that may require the presses to stay a niche activity in order to have an impact on publishing on their own terms (if they are to do so at all).

Yet, rather than thinking of the presses as needing to grow in order to have an impact on the broader OA movement, a better way of understanding the radical possibilities of scholar-led publishing is through its emphasis on collectives over individuals, as the final section of this chapter explores. This distinction will provide

the basis for an understanding of scholar-led publishing that represents the latent values of *commons* forms of organisation.

Individuals, collectives and the commons

One final way of theorising the differences between scholar-led and policy-based OA, and a way in which scholar-led publishing might assert more influence, is according to their differing emphasis on individuals versus collectives. An ethic of care, like that on display by scholar-led publishers, foregrounds a relational understanding of the subject, its dependence on and situated-ness within various collectives. In contrast, choice (or care-less) narratives treat subjects as self-determining, independent and responsible individuals participating freely in a market. Care emphasises collectives while choice emphasises the individual. The scholar-led and governmental forms of OA each approach care and choice in various ways, as shown, which in turn places different emphases on OA (and publishing more generally) as a collective activity or a something individuals are responsible for. Part of this concerns freedom: the extent to which academics are free to choose where and how to publish, irrespective of a publication's politics, labour sources, publishing standards, and so on. Choice in this context is associated with individual researchers being able to decide the best publication for their research, usually the one that is most prestigious and reaches the intended audience or will obtain the best metrics for assessment.

In striving to maintain a researcher's freedom to publish (as described above), the governmental policies prioritise the individual over the collective. The RCUK policy does this by freeing up funding for article-processing charges to allow authors to publish in the same journals they had previously. The intention, as the Finch report argued, is to reduce the price of publishing by creating a market for APCs to introduce price sensitivity in publication decisions. The idea was that price sensitivity would lead to authors choosing journals with lower APCs, thus encouraging more expensive journals to reduce their fees (Finch 2012, 11). The effect, of course, was for journals to charge APCs based on their prestige, rather than relative to their publication costs. Authors are spending someone else's money (the government's or their institution's) and so they have no reason to be price sensitive. This perhaps explains why the UK's uptake of hybrid open access, or paying an APC

to make content open access in a subscription journal, is almost three times the international average (Björk 2017). This is the price of policymaking in ways that prioritise individual freedom over the collective good.

In a different way, the HEFCE policy reduces researchers to individuals as *units of assessment*. OA via the REF is something with which researchers must comply in order to keep their jobs and attract funding for their departments. This is less concerned with individual freedom and more with the REF as a disciplinary exercise, echoing Foucault's famous line that 'discipline 'makes' individuals' (Foucault 1995, 170). Discipline, for Foucault, treats individuals 'both as objects and of instruments of its exercise' (ibid). The REF evaluates researchers as individuals: they are supposed to devise their own publication 'strategies' and put forward their best research for inclusion in a department's REF submission. Tacking the OA policy onto the REF will reinforce this individualism and will likely work against collective approaches to OA.

Despite the mention here of Foucault's understanding of discipline, it is more accurate to theorise the governmental policies as indicative of the individualising subjectivities imposed by neoliberalism, as the later Foucault describes (Foucault 2008). As Jason Read summarises: 'If disciplinary power worked by confining and fixing bodies to the production apparatuses, neoliberal power works by dispersing bodies and individuals through privatization and isolation' (Read 2009, 34). From the perspective of either policy, researchers are treated as isolated, private individuals with 'purchasing power', 'publication strategies' and the 'freedom' to determine where they publish. Freedom is emphasised as market participation and competition for resources, which is valued over approaches that are based in care or collaboration. Jeremy Gilbert illustrates how neoliberalism re-engineers the subjectivities of the citizen as the 'self-motivated, entrepreneurial worker who treats themselves and their careers as a business of which they are the manager, director and sole shareholder, and treats all other labour-market participants as competitors rather than collaborators' (Gilbert 2014, 45). The governmental forms of OA reinforce the idea of researchers as individuals competing with each other for scarce resources, which is reflective of broader trend towards the marketization of higher education that requires academics to support themselves through external funding and participate in a hyper-competitive job market.

Yet the scholar-led presses are also faced with the same competition for scarce resources. They are not able to escape the need to compete for funding, attract prestigious authors and utilise large commercial services such as Amazon and Ingram Books. However, these choices are frequently taken for pragmatic reasons in the service of a community or a wider collective goal – there would be no alternatives without such decisions. This is reflective of what Mark Fisher described as ‘capitalist realism’ or the ‘widespread sense that not only is capitalism the only viable political and economic system, but also that it is now impossible even to imagine a coherent alternative to it’ (Fisher 2009, 6). As such, despite the drive for common forms of publishing that do not explicitly conform to market or state logics, the scholar-led presses still exist within the current political-economic system and therefore have to accept a certain amount of capitalist realism.

The governmental policymakers also adopt this degree of realism in achieving their ends by ensuring that commercial publishers remain unaffected by their policies. Only this is in the service of a different goal to the scholar-led presses, which Ben Johnson described as ‘eyes on research papers’ rather than a cultural change in publishing practices. It is not for the government to make ‘protestations on how the market can be configured in order to best arrive at OA’, as Johnson explains (B. Johnson 2016, 6). OA is viewed in different terms within each approach to OA, as either conforming to current publishing norms *and* making research freely available (as the governmental policies do) or by disrupting the current publishing norms towards more collective aims *through the use of* open practices (in the case of scholar-led publishing). One form of OA preserves the current system while the other confronts it – openness is instrumental for the scholar-led presses but the end-in-itself for the governmental policies.

By foregrounding a praxis based in care, the scholar-led presses display a commitment to subjectivities understood as part of collectives, rather than as self-supporting, entrepreneurial individuals (as the governmental funding bodies do). OA is important to the scholar-led presses inasmuch as it allows them to *think through* the broader issues in scholarly communication and ground new forms of publishing based in practices that serve collectives and collective ownership. This is why, for instance, the presses exhibit a plurality of understandings of OA and do not consider ‘open access’ the be-all and end-all of their publishing work. Their understanding of

OA publishing is grounded within their praxis rather than determined by an external vision or ideology of ‘open access’.

It is tempting to think that in prioritising the collective over the individual, and downplaying the importance of individual autonomy, the scholar-led OA projects may impinge on academic freedom. For example, individual authors will not be rewarded with the same level of prestige they may receive from publishing in traditional journals and presses and so they prioritise the good of the collective – and the better futures they work towards – at the expense of their individual freedom to publish in prestigious outlets. However, a better way to think of care is in how it implies a different kind of freedom from the sorts of audit cultures and individualistic forms of assessment that restrict experimentation and require academics to publish in particular ways desired by various institutions and traditions. Referring back to Foucault’s exploration of care of the self, which Punctum Books cite as a guiding principle, we can theorise self-care as entailing freedom through care for others. As Foucault explains: ‘The care of the self is ethical in itself; but it implies complex relationships with others insofar as this *ethos* of freedom is also a way of caring for others’ (Foucault 1994, 187). It is only through self-care, and care for the relationships one participates in, that one can be truly free and not purely beholden to individual needs. Eileen Joy of Punctum Books makes a similar point about the importance of care within a collective, arguing: ‘this would be to think of Community, or the Collective, as a sort of ‘mutual admiration society’, but also as a Convalescent Ward, in which ‘taking care’ (of ourselves and each other) would be more important than ‘performing’ according to so-called ‘professional’ standards and protocols’ (Joy 2016, no pagination). Care, therefore, emphasises a different kind of freedom away from the individual freedom to be assessed but to be instead nurtured as part of a collective.

The foregrounding of care and collectivism illustrates that the values displayed by scholar-led publishers are reflective of latent commons forms of organisation, striving to articulate their values between market and state even though their practices cannot escape either domain. Their focus on collective ownership and care of scholarly publishing lends itself to being theorised as a form of commons,

which is not owned by anyone but managed by all participants¹³. Care and collectives are best understood in terms of a commons praxis, as Massimo De Angelis shows: ‘We are generally born into a commons, even if it only consists of interactions with our parents or carers, siblings and friends [...]. Values practices, such as loyalty to friends, conviviality, mutual aid, care, and even struggles, are developed in the commons’ (De Angelis 2017, 12). Even when individual scholar-led presses are forced to take pragmatic decisions and participate in neoliberal cultures around publishing and higher education, these decisions are taken for broader collective goals – framed so far as critical struggles – that display the kinds of values De Angelis describes. Open access to publications is one consequence of such a commons, but so is experimentation, care and a focus on the relationships involved in publishing processes.

In contrast, the infrastructures for the governmental OA policies are not designed and maintained cooperatively and with the common good in mind, even though they may result in shared resources that have the potential to benefit society in a different way. The infrastructure is maintained either by the private sector, in the form of commercial journal publishers (for the RCUK policy); or, in the case of the HEFCE policy, the repository and compliance software are controlled by the university but in accordance with forms of OA that publishers will allow. Both policies are therefore reflective of the neoliberal interplay between market and state that is justified in accordance with market conditions. Infrastructures are privately managed as far as possible, and where the infrastructures are university-managed, the software is frequently (though not exclusively) proprietary and the labour for managing the repository is relegated to invisible work performed by library staff.

The privatised control of scholarly infrastructures is especially noticeable in the context of ‘vertical integration’ that publishers such as Elsevier and SpringerNature are seeking by controlling all aspects of the research lifecycle, from submission to publication and beyond. For example, this vertical integration is represented in a number of Elsevier’s business acquisitions, such as Mendeley (a reference manager), SSRN (a pre-print repository) and Bepress (a provider of

¹³ There are numerous definitions of the commons, and I will be making a case for a particular form in the final two chapters of the thesis. Suffice to say, the concept of ‘commons’ is positioned as neither public nor private, as either a process, attitude or thing-in-itself, and entails a form of co-management according to certain organisational formations.

repository and publishing software for universities). Many universities already use Elsevier's PURE institutional repository and their current research Information systems (CRIS) for complying with the HEFCE policy, all indicating the success of Elsevier's movement towards a totally enclosed publishing ecosystem. The value of this is based on the data generated by user interactions on each platform (so-called transactional analytics), allowing Elsevier to further tailor their products to the needs of universities. This is why, as Roger C. Schonfeld explores in a blog post, Elsevier no longer define themselves as a publisher but an 'information analytics' company (Schonfeld 2017). Such a move to increase private ownership of scholarly communication is incentivised by the governmental policies for OA through APCs, repository services and the need to track compliance.

In prioritising individual freedom over the collective concern, the governmental policies restate the values imposed by marketization and individualism within higher education and scholarly publishing, the kinds of values that many of the scholar-led presses are opposing. The funding bodies of course have to do this: they adopt a pragmatic approach in order to achieve the government's aims with minimum fuss to the status quo. The scholar-led presses, on the other hand, are free to present an alternative to the status quo and do so through both their theoretical work and their practice. The funding agencies thus have to reflect the government's ideology while the scholar-led presses are free to challenge it, even if they are still in many ways beholden to market logic. Importantly, the presses represent a diversity of responses to the status quo, each predicated on unique understandings of openness and their own ideas of what is important in publishing. The presses are not all pulling in the *same* direction but collectively represent a host of scholar-led alternatives to the dominant publishing hegemony. This, I will argue in the final two chapters, is what makes the commons: forms of publishing (and the relationships and institutions that sustain them) that facilitate a diverse range of self-governed, non-commercial publishing projects based on care and cooperation.

Conclusion

In comparing the governmental and scholar-led approaches to OA I have highlighted a number of significant differences between them that give rise to differing values relating to OA. In situating these on a continuum between choice

and care, it is clear that the governmental policies more closely reflect notions of academic freedom and individualised market choice, while the scholar-led presses foreground a praxis based in care and collectivism. The policies are therefore rooted in dominant neoliberal thinking – the justification of state action by market measurements – while the scholar-led presses are best positioned as more akin to a commons understanding of infrastructure and organisation in which open access is one of the key features of the collective management of the means of production. This, however, does not mean that the scholar-led presses analysed here can be conceived as an actual existing commons, but that their values point in this direction.

OA is important in each context but for different reasons, reflecting its indeterminate nature as a boundary object. The governmental policies treat OA, particularly free access to research articles, as intrinsically valuable and an end-in-itself, whereas the scholar-led presses display a commitment to OA as important alongside either characteristics such as experimentation, ethics of care and non-commercial forms of publishing. For the scholar-led presses, OA is instrumental as the basis for their ethical commitments, but it is not necessarily the most valuable aspect to them. Arguably a commitment to their disciplines and communities is of greater importance than OA is to the scholar-led presses, or even a commitment to a broader political end. For the governmental policies, free access to research is the telos of the whole system; it is the reason for freeing up public money in the form of block grants for APCs, and the reason for requiring massive upheaval on the part of universities to comply with the new REF demands. Suffice to say that OA is not the be-all and end-all for the scholar-led presses, while it is for the governmental policies.

This is one of the reasons why the governmental OA policies are likely to achieve their ends of more publicly accessible research, but they are unlikely to encourage researchers to *en masse* adopt open practices for their own sake. This is especially true from a humanities perspective in which the monograph is largely absent from the governmental move to open access and the humanities may appear less important as a result.¹⁴ The policies are punitive in that researchers are penalised

¹⁴ Although it is no small task to mandate OA for books (Eve et al. 2017), the governmental policies illustrate little desire to instigate experimentation into alternatives for OA monograph provision.

for not observing them, though they do little to instigate a culture around OA. The scholar-led presses, on the other hand, are embedded within the communities they serve and through care can help researchers publish their work in the ways ‘they themselves consider to be most appropriate for their particular project’, (quoting Open Humanities Press from earlier in the chapter). As I argued throughout, the scholar-led presses represent a counter-hegemonic alternative to the dominant forms of OA by both serving and being governed by their communities.

The indeterminate nature of OA as a boundary object means it is inherently connected to the environment in which it is practiced. This is why it is well conceived in commons-based environments, representing a plurality of approaches, and is less suitable for a top-down policy mandate, especially when the mandate indiscriminately applies to all disciplines equally (and therefore impacts them differently). A scholar-led commons can articulate forms of OA that are diverse, experimental, non-commercial and grounded in care. They can represent a multitude of struggles against traditional and conservative forms of publishing, which the governmental policies for OA simply represent rather than challenge. Through collective action, scholar-led publishing can thus create the conditions for progressive forms of publishing that exist beyond the ownership of the market or the state.

Nonetheless, there are numerous forms of commons, such as urban, digital and cultural commons, that each reflect a range of politics from libertarian to liberal-humanist to autonomous Marxist. Much like OA, the commons does not necessarily entail a resistance to neoliberalism or even a politically desirable state of affairs, but merely refers to a form of co-ownership (or non-ownership) of, or a set of relationships, around a particular resource. The politics of the commons need to be articulated and continually reassessed for it to represent a coherent alternative to neoliberal forms of publishing. In the final two chapters of the thesis I explore ways in which we can both think about and encourage scholar-led publishing as a form of commons, connected with other forms of commons (both non-scholar-led and non-publishing based) all working towards a shared horizon through a series of critical struggles.

One of the primary values associated with scholar-led publishing I have illustrated is its focus on an ethic of care, and the form of commons I will argue for in the remains of the thesis seeks to provide a way forward for instantiating values of care and mutual reliance in forms of scholar-led OA publishing – what I will term the care-full commons. The next chapter describe this in detail, distinguishing the care-full commons from other commons-based projects and making an argument for ways of nurturing scholar-led publishing (and beyond) as a form of commons.

Chapter 6. The *care-full commons*: on the radical potential of commoning for OA in the humanities

Introduction

Having uncovered and analysed the values of distinct approaches to OA in the humanities, from market-based and policy-led to non-commercial and community-led examples, this chapter now makes the case for reorienting OA in the humanities towards an ongoing struggle within a commons framework. The previous chapters explored how many scholar-led presses, in foregrounding a praxis based in care, orient their publishing practices in favour of scholarly communities, in contrast to the individualistic vision of OA promoted by governmental policies. The scholar-led ‘caring’ approach can help us reframe OA in the humanities as a kind of commons that reflects the progressive values for publishing I have analysed so far. This chapter seeks to provide the theoretical basis for such a researcher-led commons by elucidating some of the dominant themes within commons forms of organisation and applying them to the practices of scholar-led publishing. This strategy foregrounds examples of the commons in practice, theorising them as a network of small and mutually-reliant scholar-led publishers that I term the *care-full commons*. This theoretical work paves the way for the concluding chapter that makes recommendations for some of the possible ways of organising to nurture such a vision.

I am turning to the literature on the commons at this stage as a way of conceptualising the values and practices of the scholar-led publishing projects analysed so far. A diversity of care-full, DIY and grassroots projects, I argue, are well suited to a commons understanding of scholarly communication. Such a framing is intended to provide space for the various agonistic understandings of OA – conceived so far as boundary objects – while maintaining a coherent counter-hegemonic standpoint towards traditional and commercial forms of publishing. The

scholar-led commons I argue for here seeks to point to new relationships and subjectivities within publishing, higher education and beyond.

Commons are often defined as a resource plus the system for managing that resource (e.g., Ostrom 2008, 2). This definition may be helpful for introducing ideas of the commons, as I will in the first section of this chapter, but it is limited in its application to the care-based commons that I am advocating because it fails to capture the relational aspects involved with commons organisation. In particular, knowledge commons – of which open access publishing can be one – comprise different kinds of resources, both rivalrous and non-rivalrous, alongside a host of situational and relational arrangements unique to the commons in question. It is unlikely that a resource-plus-governance approach will adequately capture the nuanced relationships and informal practices involved in scholar-led publishing, which tend to be diverse and not based on consensus. A focus on values and attitudes is better, therefore, to illustrate how the commons is also a practice or way of relating to fellow commoners and the world more generally (known as ‘commoning’).

The first section provides an overview of different approaches to the commons within open access publishing, illustrating how many of these are predicated upon rational, consensus-based discourses that are inappropriate to the commons understood as an emancipatory project. This section illustrates why Ostrom’s work on the commons is ultimately lacking for my purposes: because it is predicated upon liberal, consensus-based decision making that positions the commons as a ‘third way’ between market and state, rather than something necessarily entangled with each domain. The chapter’s second section turns to the literature on the history of the commons as a site of struggle, employing the historically-grounded work of Peter Linebaugh and Silvia Federici, among others, to illustrate that action and governance around a shared resource is not a consensual process but is based on antagonism both within and outside the common sphere. The final section of the chapter speculates on the possibilities of thinking about scholar-led publishing as a commons-based ecosystem of small, mutually-reliant presses that I term the ‘care-full commons’.

Commons / Commoners / Commoning

Although ideas of the commons have been latent in much of the foregoing thesis, the term itself was purposefully left un-interrogated until now in order to make a strong case for a specific idea of the commons that creates the conditions for the alternative forms of OA that have been explored so far. As I will illustrate in this chapter, many uses of the term *commons* in scholarly communications are themselves ill- or un-defined and intend to evoke a kind of participatory, inclusive or freely accessible resource. This lack of definition may be due to the popularity of the term and its deployment in the media to describe everything from Facebook (Gapper 2017) to Bicycle Rental schemes (Rushe 2017), neither of which should be accurately described as a commons. This popularity is no doubt due in part to the resurgence of interest in the commons following Elinor Ostrom's receipt of the Nobel Prize for economics in 2009. The interest in Ostrom's research on the commons has also coincided with the work of theorists who characterise the Web and Web-based practices using the language of the commons; for example, Yochai Benkler's description of Wikipedia and open-source software as kinds of 'commons-based peer production' (Benkler 2006).

Much like open access, then, the commons does not reflect a unified definition or body of research but is representative of a wide range of perspectives and practices. In order to illustrate the potential for conceiving of certain flavours of OA in the humanities as a specific kind of commons, and to cut through the various uses of the term (well defined and otherwise), it is important to understand some of the ways in which 'the commons' is theorised today. Commons, commoners and commoning are all concepts integral to how I am defining the commons – any approach to the commons should account for all three.

Elinor Ostrom's work is a good introduction to the commons. Many conceptions of the commons in open access publishing discourse derive (albeit often loosely) from Ostrom's analysis of common-pool resource management. Her work focused primarily on the governance of natural (and, later in her career, knowledge-based) resources and how collective action can be utilised to successfully manage such resources, termed commons. Commons in this sense are distinct from *ungoverned* resources such as water supplies, air and land. The latter entail some kind of management or governance, rather than free access to all without condition.

This is a crucial distinction and one that is often employed as a response to critiques based on Garrett Hardin's 'tragedy of the commons' argument. Hardin famously claimed that because humans are rational and self-interested, their self-interest 'compels' them to utilise as much of the natural resource as possible in order to maximise their gains. Hardin concludes: 'Ruin is the destination toward which all men rush, each pursuing his own best interest in a society that believes in the freedom of the commons. Freedom in a commons brings ruin to all' (Hardin 1968, 1244). The problem with this argument, as Ostrom and others noted, is that it pertains to natural resources of unrestricted access rather than those that are *managed* in common. Ostrom argues that the tragedyists characterise commoners as "helpless" individuals caught in an inexorable process of destroying their own resources', although there are in fact many examples of collectively managed commons that do not lead to this state of affairs (Ostrom 2008, 8). Thus, the commons entails various forms of resource management, not just access to them.

Within so-called knowledge commons, 'open access' can be a feature of the resource itself, i.e., that it is accessible without condition. But it is the management and production of the resource by and for a particular community that sets it apart from other forms of organising and gives a community its 'commonsiness', as Fagundes terms it (2014, 421). Commons may be composed of a mixture of 'rivalrous' resources, where use necessary leads to their depletion, and 'non-rivalrous' resources such as digital materials that can be used and shared without depletion or degradation (Hess and Ostrom 2007, 9).¹⁵ These resources may also be excludable or non-excludable depending on how easy it is to prevent people from accessing the resource. Figure 1. provides an overview of different kinds of goods and their excludability and subtractability (rivalrous-ness).

¹⁵ Goods can even be classified as 'anti-rivalrous' where usage improves the actual resource itself (Olleros 2018).

		SUBTRACTABILITY	
		<i>Low</i>	<i>High</i>
EXCLUSION	<i>Difficult</i>	Public goods Useful knowledge Sunsets	Common-pool resources Libraries Irrigation systems
	<i>Easy</i>	Toll or club goods Journal subscriptions Day-care centers	Private goods Personal computers Doughnuts

Figure 2. 'Types of Goods' adapted from Hess & Ostrom (2007)

Digital publishing outputs can either be club goods or public goods (e.g., Potts et al. 2017), and the infrastructures for publishing comprise a mixture of all kinds of goods. Note that just because something is rivalrous, it does not mean that it cannot be shared within and between particular communities. For example, many households keep tools that they use only once a year. These kinds of items are regularly shared within commons despite the fact that only one person or group can use them at a time (De Angelis 2017, 39).

Although commons research focuses primarily on 'natural' resources, the status of these resources is, as Carlo Vercellone explains, always 'a social and political construct, whether it refers to a mode of organising or a set of criteria to ascribe the status of common goods to a set of resources, goods or services. The ontological foundation, determined historically, of the current position of the Common, cannot be ascribed to the intrinsic nature of goods, but to the ability of labour to self-organise' (Vercellone n.d., no pagination). Commons are not arrangements determined solely by a pragmatic engagement with the resource itself, whether a natural resource or otherwise, but are instead forms of political self-organisation based on various decisions taken and acts of exclusion. This means that commons are inherently political and representative of a range of perspectives and forms of organisation. It is also, contrary to Ostrom's conception, not a form of institution resembling 'neither the state nor the market' (Ostrom 2008, 1). Instead, Vercellone argues, the commons involves 'the establishment of a new hierarchy between Common, private and public' rather than oppositional forms of organisation (Vercellone n.d.).

Thus, much like OA itself, the commons is both complicated and not necessarily an emancipatory or progressive form of organisation. But it is an inherently political way of organising. It can represent different forms of political

organisation and modes of production that may not work towards an emancipatory state of affairs. For example, George Caffentzis illustrates how the World Bank, an emblem of free market capitalism, advocates local forms of commons land management in a way that is ‘functional to capitalist accumulation’ (George Caffentzis 2004, no pagination), while Peter Linebaugh highlights how organisations such as the World Bank hope to encourage the idea of the commons ‘as a means to socialize poverty and hence to privatize wealth’ (Linebaugh 2008, 279). Self-organisation as a commons, in this context, can be used to justify the withdrawal of state support in place of a focus on autonomy and self-regulating collectivity.

Similarly, returning to the topic at hand, many self-described ‘commons’ projects for open access publishing simply restate the values of commercial publishing and neoliberalism while relying on the language of a more progressive politics. The Creative Commons organisation is a notable example. CC licenses are addenda to traditional copyright that apply blanket rights to creative works, allowing licensors to keep their copyright and attribution rights while stipulating how a work may be reused (for commercial purposes, for use in another derivative work, etc.) The most permissive CC licence¹⁶, Creative Commons attribution (CC BY), is stipulated by many as the only way to achieve ‘true’ open access, an argument made by signatories of canonical definitions of open access such as the BOAI declaration (BOAI 2002), which heavily influenced the UK government’s approach to open access. Arguments in favour of permissive licensing (such as CC BY) claim that academic works should be free of restrictions on use and reuse, even for commercial purposes, and CC licenses should be used to guarantee these rights while preserving the right of the author to be attributed for their creation.

The Creative Commons organisation produces literature framing CC-licensed outputs as alternatives to private- or state-owned creative/scholarly works. Borrowing heavily from Ostrom’s work, they claim ‘the commons sees resources as common goods, providing a common wealth extending beyond state boundaries, to be passed on in undiminished or enhanced form to future generations’ (Stacey and Pearson 2017, 6). References to the ‘values and norms’ of commoning enhance this rhetoric and affirm CC’s commitment to a new way of operating beyond market and state. Yet, despite its name and ostensible commitment to commons ideals, Creative

¹⁶ Besides the public domain declaration ‘CC0’, which is not technically a licence

Commons merely reflects ordinary intellectual property norms and relations of market-based forms of creation. CC licenses simply designate how a proprietary work can be used; it does not confer ownership of a work to a collective or abandon the idea of private ownership of digital works altogether, nor does it entail that the means of production themselves are in common ownership as a commons might imply. Instead, Creative Commons reinforces a private and individualist understanding of intellectual property, and the social hierarchies this entails, especially the association of published scholarship with private property that can be used as a currency for individual career progression within the university.

This situation is reflective of CC's commitment to liberal individualism and private property. Lawrence Lessig, one of the organisation's founders, writes in his book on free culture that: '[the] free culture I defend in this book is a balance between anarchy and control. A free culture, like a free market, is filled with property. It is filled with rules of property and contract that get enforced by the state' (Lessig 2004, xvi). Lessig describes Creative Commons resources as operating within a capitalist economy that uses free culture to enhance and improve the business prospects of those who share. This is why Creative Commons sees itself as promoting 'innovation' and 'reach and impact' alongside participation and uniting around an undefined 'common cause' (Stacey and Pearson 2017, 14). This commitment to liberal individualism is not only reflected in the attribution requirement for CC-licensed works, which individualises the work as sole property of its creator, but it is also noticeable in much of Creative Commons' framing of the benefits of CC-licensing to the *creators*. For example: 'the fact that the name of the creator follows a CC-licensed work makes the licenses an important means to develop a reputation or, in corporate speak, a brand' (Stacey and Pearson 2017). Creative Commons therefore utilises the language of progressive politics mixed with the business-friendly hallmarks of branding and innovation.

CC's definition of the commons lacks any real meaning as a commons, despite its influence in scholarly publishing. Not only is CC-licensed work not common property, unlike movements that reject copyright in favour of the public domain, common- or non-ownership (the Situationists, for example), it also says nothing about the ways in which the creative work was brought into being: the labour involved, the profits taken and the governance of such efforts. In order to represent a truly scholar-owned commons, the governance and/or ownership of the

publication processes themselves will have to at least be taken into account, not just the accessibility of the published outputs. Writing about the commons more generally, Massimo De Angelis writes: ‘The problematising of commons within a project of emancipation thus must not simply rely on lists of isolated objects, but must open up to the internal relations among the components of these lists and the respective commoning’ (De Angelis 2017, 64–65). When describing something as a commons, then, one should not just refer to the resource itself but also the structures around how it is produced, reproduced and organised. This is why, as De Angelis and Stavrides highlight, a more rigorous understanding of the commons includes an appreciation of not just the resource (or ‘pooled resources’), but its users (‘the commoners’) and the relationships and practices involved in its maintenance and access (‘commoning’) (De Angelis and Stavrides 2010). Definitions of the commons as a resource or a resource-plus-governance are limited because they fail to take into account the informal practices and social relations involved between commoners that cannot be accurately captured within rules and governance regimes.

The commons therefore entails an appreciation not just of the commonly-owned and maintained resources, but the commoners who share the resources and define how they are used, accessed and maintained, alongside the informal practices of commoning that operate within, between and outside the commons. Commoning is a social praxis that prioritises the collective over the individual and foregrounds the relationships involved in producing the commons over the resource itself. Commoning, as De Angelis and Stavrides explain, can occur in diverse settings and non-commons-based arenas (De Angelis and Stavrides 2010), which means that as commons projects ebb and flow in their sustainability and resilience, commoning can continue as a practice in many different forms of collective organisation (from factories and supermarkets to universities and libraries). For this reason, commoning and care – as theorised in the previous chapter – are related in their focus on the situatedness of interpersonal relationships. However, while an ethics of care foregrounds relationships as an end in itself, commoning does so with respect to a broader, shared, common horizon. This is the form of commons for open access publishing I will develop and advocate for over the course of this chapter: it is grounded in relationships and mutual reliance for the production of scholarly publications that are commonly owned and produced. It is necessary at this stage to

return to the scholar-led presses analysed in Chapters 4 and 5 to try to understand the extent to which such a commons, or the possibility of one, already exists.

Scholar-led open access and the struggle for the commons

I have introduced the commons as something more than just a commonly-owned resource; it also entails the ways in which resources are governed and maintained, along with an appreciation of the relationships within and outside the commons sphere. By accepting that the commons is not opposed to the market and the state, but necessarily part of it, we can begin to see that it is actually best conceived as a process or way of foregrounding the relationships involved in commons efforts, even though they may exist in market settings. Peter Linebaugh argues: '[t]o speak of the commons as if it were a natural resource is misleading at best and dangerous at worst, the commons is an activity and, if anything, it expresses relationships in society that are inseparable from relations to nature. It might be better to keep the word as a verb, rather than as a noun, a substantive' (Linebaugh 2008, 279). In trying to understand the potential position OA in the humanities as a commons, it is necessary to appreciate that commoning is a *practice* that can operate outside of a self-defined commons site (and that, in turn, emancipatory practices of commoning may be absent from self-described commons projects, as I have shown with Creative Commons). We see glimpses of the commons through various practices of commoning in already existing scholar-led OA projects that may be latent and thus require drawing out and made explicit.

For example, although the scholar-led presses analysed in Chapters 4 and 5 do not present themselves as a unified whole, I have shown how they represent values that are reflective of the processes of commoning and commons practices. This includes working non-competitively and horizontally, as opposed to traditional vertical (hierarchical) forms of organisation, sharing expertise and resources between presses in the service of a broader community. These practices reflect *commoning* in practice: scholar-led publishers display levels of mutual reliance in the service of a broader horizon of openly accessible scholarship, even if they do not think of themselves as a 'commons' per se. This is what Max Haiven terms the 'ethos' of the commons, distinguished from the actuality and the horizon of the commons, that can be animated by 'the ideals of grassroots direct democracy, egalitarianism, anti-

oppression, refusal of state power and commodification, open access, peer-to-peer production, and participatory, non-hierarchical flexibility (Haiven 2017, 29). The ethos can stand outside a defined horizon and work within property arrangements that are not part of a commonly-owned stock.

Scholar-led presses gesture towards such a common stock of property in their actions, though none treat their publications, software and resources as commonly owned. Instead they rely on primarily on conventional copyright and Creative Commons licenses to make work freely available. This reliance on liberal forms of intellectual property may be due to attachments to an individual's intellectual property as cultural capital, though scholarly norms would not prevent authors from receiving credit for works they have authored, if desired. I have already shown throughout the thesis the pressures on individual academics to publish in the correct ways for career purposes – such a deeply engrained practice is difficult to overturn for publications. Yet, a common stock of legal and technical resources, alongside sharing of expertise, is arguably easier to share as common property within a non-competitive project, especially when doing so results in greater mutual reliance. Consequently, despite referencing the scholarly commons as a motivation in a number of their interviews, scholar-led presses display a somewhat traditional understanding of property that illustrates a concern for author's fears over gifting their copyright to the commons. This reliance on traditional property rights is taken for strategic reasons (as shown in the previous chapter) and it is therefore unlikely that a commonly-owned stock of published outputs is achievable within current academic career restraints in the neoliberal university.

The difficulty of overcoming traditional views on intellectual property is perhaps why liberal ideas of the commons as *consensual* and operating within the demands of commercial publishers as 'stakeholders' have gained currency in the move to open access. Many of these are based on reaching agreement between a range of actors involved in scholar communication. For example, Bosman et al. propose the digital scholarly commons as a way of ensuring that new initiatives for scholarly communication form a coherent, interoperable and appealing system that acts as a viable alternative to traditional modes of publishing, arguing for: 'A set of principles and rules for the community of researchers and other stakeholders to ascribe to, the practices based on those principles, and the common pool of resources around which the principles and practices evolve' (Bosman et al. 2017, 3). Such

principles are intended to create an ‘agreement among knowledge producers and users’ (ibid). The authors set out to define a set of principles that are designed to be inclusive to stakeholders in all disciplines, both commercial and non-commercial providers, and all forms of scholarly output from papers to data to code:

1. Research and knowledge should be freely available to all who wish to use or reuse it.
2. Participation in the production and use of knowledge should be open to all who wish to participate.
3. There should be no systemic barriers and disincentives to prevent either such free use or open participation. (Bosman et al. 2017, 13)

These principles are accompanied by a set of rules participants should follow in order to maintain the commons. The basis of this idea of the commons is that it should be open to all and governed according to principles that do not prohibit access or participation. If organisations decline to follow these principles, then they cannot be considered part of the commons.

Much like Creative Commons, the Scholarly Commons Working Group does not treat commons outputs or infrastructures as commonly-owned goods. Research should be ‘freely available’ rather than commonly-owned. This position is reflected in the authors’ all-encompassing criteria for participation that includes any entity holding a stake in scholarly communication, entailing respect for private and commercial enterprise as equally valid to projects with a more progressive outlook. Similar to the UK governmental policies, such a stance merely focuses on the public accessibility of research objects, rather than on the broader ways in which research is published and made open in the context of a broader project of scholarly communication reform. The authors’ conception of the commons therefore lacks any value as an emancipatory or radical project, but instead argues for ways in which any organisation can produce openly accessible research objects, irrespective of its governance structure, commercial status or the extent to which it is answerable to a research community.

A similar initiative by Bilder and colleagues puts forward a more detailed set of principles for open scholarly infrastructures that does seek to address some of the pernicious effects of commercial ownership in scholarly communication (Bilder,

Lin, and Neylon 2015). These principles go further than Bosman et al. by requiring infrastructure organisations to be stakeholder-governed, to encourage surplus generation from services rather than user data and to prevent lobbying by private firms. While the author's intentions are certainly admirable, they recognise that part of the problem lies in the implementation of their principles: 'We have not addressed the question of how the community can determine when a service has become important enough to be regarded as infrastructure nor how to transition such a service to community governance. If we can answer that question the community must take the responsibility to make that decision' (Bilder, Lin, and Neylon 2015). Here, the authors illustrate one of the main drawbacks of treating the commons as a thing to be managed by a predefined 'community': namely, who defines terms such as 'the community' 'management' and 'participation'? And even if it were possible to consensually define 'the community' (i.e., who is excludable and who is not), it is unlikely that a set of principles could be decided upon without violently imposing (in a Derridean sense explored in the previous chapter) on some members of the community, given the breadth of its proposed application.

Both Bosman et al. and Bilder et al. seek to create an internally-governed commons that operates according to various principles and degrees of exclusion. These principles are based on interactions within institutions and Ostrom would surely condone their intentions. As principles of action, both of these approaches seek consensus between rational (rather than agonistic or internally-conflictual) parties on what is acceptable within the scholarly commons. Each approach is broad in its application and pertains to all scholarly communications indiscriminately, assuming that the 'solution' (as Bosman et al. term it) to the problem of governance in scholarly communication lies in participants following a set of principles of varying degrees of complexity. Such liberal understandings of the commons that rely on consensus-building assume, much like Hardin's tragedy of the commons, that humans are rational, self-interested actors and that institutions can be created to turn this self-interest into an agreement for consensually-governed systems for scholarly publishing.

The problem with such an approach to the commons is that, as we have seen, open access is a boundary object that does not refer to a common set of practices, assumptions or principles. Applying a set of principles that have been decided in advance, to an all-encompassing ecosystem of scholar-led publishers with a diverse

set of commitments and understandings of openness, is undoubtedly going to exclude many perspectives. It raises questions over *who* is the community that gets to govern and exclude, and what gives them the right to decide the conditions. These questions are especially relevant for understandings of the commons that are all-encompassing or operate on a large scale, which tend to favour more powerful stakeholders, wealthy disciplines and countries in the Global North. Such commons treat subjects in a political vacuum rather than embedded in a particular situation and entangled in a number of different relationships and projects with asymmetrical power structures. Patrick Bresnihan argues that the liberal approach to commoning fails to appreciate this attachment or ‘entangled subjectivity’, and instead treats participants in a commons as ‘calculating, liberal (human) subject[s] separated from a world of other liberal subjects and discrete, measurable (non-human) resources (Bresnihan 2016, 7).’ A similar point is made by Fred Saunders who argues that the conception of a ‘rational resource user’ in the commons fails to adequately account for a ‘meaningful consideration of local norms, values and interests in commons projects’ (Saunders 2014).

Indeed, any such global approach to a commons, especially one that is agnostic (and therefore tacitly favourable) towards commercial organisations, will strive to homogenise local conditions that favour the business over the commoners. Tom Slee makes a comparable point regarding software design for improving urban commons, such as those created and implemented by the Code for America organisation, that: ‘seek to force the uniqueness of individual cities into standardised frameworks in order to build software that works across many cities. The very idea of a one-size-fits-all solution to bottom-up city innovation is flawed, because every application that is successfully implemented in a large number of cities erodes the uniqueness that makes the city distinct’ (Slee 2016, 157). Large, all-encompassing commons that aim for a consensual interoperability will therefore nullify the nuanced local arrangements in favour of a simple *solutions* that benefit those with most power and capital.

The commons, then, is better positioned as a struggle that recognises the micro-political situations of each commons and the need for experimentation into alternatives and ways of resistance. A more historical perspective of the agricultural commons as the centre of medieval English life reveals that the commons has in fact always been such a struggle. Silvia Federici illustrates how, contrary to naïve

historical understandings that portray feudal society as harmonious, the medieval village was a ‘theater of daily warfare’ (Federici 2004, 26). Lords would try to limit peasant access to common land through litigation, taxation and demands that peasants carry out certain ‘labour services’ on the lord’s land (ibid). Jean Birrell describes how in the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries lords were continually litigating against commoners for using more of the commons than laws permitted, despite the fact that ‘the erosion of pastures and woodland inevitably reduced the area in which they could be exercised, while the number of commoners increased’ (Birrell 1987, 23). The increase in population size, in addition to a loss of common land, meant commoners were forced to share less common land with more commoners. This struggle was to continue through to the modern period, where it was made worse by the dissolution of the monasteries in the sixteenth century which resulted in the enclosure and commodification of large swathes of common land (Linebaugh 2008, 49). Caffentzis and Federici estimate that common lands decreased from 25% of English land to just 3% by the start of the twenty-first century (G. Caffentzis and Federici 2014, 104).

The struggle of the commons emerges as one of the key features of a scholar-led commons. Indeed, the origins of the term common, from the Latin *communis*, denotes an obligation or gift towards the other (but does not expect reciprocation), being the opposite of ‘*immunis*’ meaning ‘not under obligation, exempt’ (Lummis 1996, 21). Roberto Esposito goes further, delving into the etymology of *communis* to dismantle the idea that ‘the common’ refers to something *held in common*, be it ethnically, territorially, or spiritually (Esposito 2010). Instead, for Esposito’s deconstructive analysis, the common is a negative quality, representing a lack, void or distance between the other: ‘In the community, subjects do not find a principle of identification nor an aseptic enclosure within which they can establish transparent communication or even a content to be communicated. They don’t find anything else except that void, that distance, that extraneousness that constitutes them as being missing for themselves’ (Esposito 2010, 7). This distance between the subject and the other ‘decenters’ the proprietary subject and reveals what it is not – what Esposito terms ‘common non-belonging’ (ibid).

It is this idea of the common that makes most sense with respect to the scholarly commons. In a historical context, it is clear that the commons necessarily entails a struggle, a distance or lack of consensus within a community and so cannot

be thought of as harmonious or based on firm agreement. This does not mean, as Gary Hall argues, that a ‘common, oppositional horizon’ is not possible between advocates of open access and free culture; rather, ‘[i]t is merely to acknowledge that a certain amount of antagonism and dissensus is what makes both the common and community possible. (Hall 2016a, 9).’ The scholar-led presses analysed in the previous chapters represent this oppositional horizon while simultaneously employing different tactics, values and rationales for open access. A common oppositional horizon might be, as Hardt and Negri frame it, a reclaiming of the ‘common’:

By “the common” we mean, first of all, the common wealth of the material world—the air, the water, the fruits of the soil, and all nature’s bounty—which in classic European political text is often claimed to be the inheritance of humanity as a whole, to be shared together. We consider the common also and more significantly those results of social production that are necessary for social interaction and further production, such as knowledges, languages, codes, information, affects, and so forth. This notion of the common does not position humanity separate from nature, as either its exploiter or its custodian, but focuses rather on the practices of interaction, care, and cohabitation in a common world, promoting the beneficial and limiting the detrimental forms of the common (Hardt and Negri 2009, vii).

Such a vision is loose enough to constitute a shared horizon but can operate as the basis for a kind of publishing ‘solidarity economy’ – a form of cooperative economy based on ‘self-help, self-responsibility, democracy, equality, equity and solidarity’ rather than competition and individual gain (Solidarity Economy Association n.d.). This does not prefigure any particular plan or way forward but many different open access experiments all in solidarity with one another. Because of this, the commons I advocate for is a reformist one that is permanently in struggle with existing institutions for publishing, rather than the common of Hardt and Negri that seeks ‘exodus’ from pre-existing institutions in favour of new ones (2009, 150), or a liberal conception of the commons that treats it as a consensual third way between the market and the state. The former lacks, as Vangelis Papadimitropoulos argues, ‘a ‘realistic’ plan of a transition from capitalism to the commons’ (Papadimitropoulos

2017, 576), while the latter simply rehearses the kinds of values that an emancipatory politics seeks to resist.

A scholar-led commons for open access in the humanities will therefore take into account not just the resources and their governance, but the relationships between commoners and the practices of commoning that sustain their efforts as part of a struggle over scholarly communication. Focusing on relationships is a way of instantiating the practices of care employed by the scholar-led presses analysed in Chapter 4 into an ecosystem for open access publishing. Caring for diversity and heterogeneity in publishing, in the context of a broader set of struggles with a common horizon, lends itself to instances of small, semi-autonomous projects that are loosely affiliated but mutually reliant. Larger projects become ungovernable and tend towards centralisation, whereas small projects can employ governance structures through direct democracy and assemblies that are reflective of the interpersonal relationships in the commons site. Such an argument for small, situated and decentralised commons over large, indiscriminate and centralised forms is in opposition to maximalist approaches to the commons (e.g. the FORCE paper discussed earlier), and platform-based projects such as Humanities Commons (2018) that, despite being non-profit, end up replicating many of the values of individualised, (neo)liberal for-profit social media. Platforms are centrally governed but global in reach, making them unable to account for nuanced relational practices of commoning in local communities and a variety of contexts. In opposition to this, the care-full commons I am about to describe would be a decentralised network of small projects, attempting to weave a path between autonomy and mutual reliance in order to avoid the trappings of such all-encompassing projects.

Much of this chapter has been dedicated to illustrating both what the commons is not (despite claiming to be), and where it is employed in a way that simply restates the values of neoliberalism. As a way of moving beyond this and towards something affirmative but still speculative, the final section in this chapter sets out a commons-based alternative understanding of OA. Termed the care-full commons, this argument builds on the analysis of the commons developed so far to theorise how such commons-based forms of OA publishing might operate.

The care-full commons

The *care-full commons* is a way of conceptualising the values of those scholar-led projects analysed in Chapter 4 as an interrelated ecosystem of OA presses in the humanities. This ecosystem could extend into and collaborate with similar projects and institutions, all of which would be held together by care for the relationships involved in all aspects of the publishing process. The care-full commons would reach beyond scholar-led OA and into progressive and commons-based projects run by activists, art collectives, libraries, university presses or a mixture of all of them. Such a commons encourages reliance between initiatives outside of OA publishing that work towards reclaiming the common, including projects seeking to transform higher education along common lines, such as university coops (Neary and Winn 2017) and informal experiments in free and collaborative education such as The IF Project and the Public School (The Public School n.d.; IF Project n.d.). Yet in this final section I will describe only those features of the care-full commons that relate to open access publishing (although the latter is a necessary subject for further research, as I will describe in the final chapter). Thinking about scholar-led publishing in this ‘care-full’ way is therefore the final step in showing how OA can provide a counterpoint to neoliberalism through not-for-profit, experimental approaches to publishing that promote difference.

The care-full commons does not currently exist in actuality but is latent in many of the practices of open access publishers I have analysed so far. Extrapolating from these practices, the following section offers something of a blueprint for the care-full commons: a discussion of some of its potential features as observed through scholar-led publishing and theorised as a struggle for common modes of production. This blueprint is speculative. It prefigures certain values and practices of commoning but does not presuppose to know all the forms of organisation that will arise out of experimental practices of commoning – it is thus always in transition. The care-full commons creates the conditions for commons forms of organisation that will produce surprising and subversive results that cannot be predicted in advance. It frames OA as a counter-hegemonic construct that pushes back against the neoliberalisation of higher education and the marketisation of scholarly communication, while also resisting naïve policy-led approaches that adopt a

conservative stance to OA as achievable only in accordance with market logic – such as those studied in Chapter 3. The care-full commons could therefore return the ownership and governance of OA to scholars and those with an interest in cultivating a common horizon. Crucially this process is not always consensual, both between commoners and in the broader struggle *against* neoliberal forms of organisation; the care-full commons is a space that recognises dissensus as a necessity within any democratic struggle, as discussed at various points throughout this thesis. Such a standpoint will entail engagement, as the final chapter will explore, with pre-existing institutions for publishing and higher education in order to foster the conditions for diverse perspectives within these organisations.

In both creating new organisations and engaging with pre-existing ones, there is an interplay in the care-full commons between experimentation and pragmatism, between creating and maintaining. A deconstructive approach to the commons is one that tries to avoid stabilisations that preclude experimentation and difference but accepts that such stabilisations are unavoidable in responsible ethico-political decision-making. In his reading of Derrida's work on the university, Simon Morgan Wortham describes Derrida's 'continual countering' or 'with against' position towards institutionalisation that accepts its necessity but constantly seeks to unsettle or refuse its stabilisations (Morgan Wortham 2006, 11). Similarly, a 'care-full' approach to the commons maintains the position that care cannot be presupposed or stabilised in an institutional context and instead needs continual countering through flexible organisational structures.

Given this, the care-full commons I describe here is an ecosystem of small, community-owned presses acting in solidarity with one another and whose forms of organisation work towards a common horizon. By community-owned I mean scholar-owned, like those presses analysed so far, but also library/university-owned or likely a combination of these forms of ownership. Much like scholar-led publishing, presses in the care-full commons will be embedded in local, disciplinary and/or institutional networks. They may be spontaneous and ephemeral organisations or more formalised collectives for creating and sustaining outputs under a particular theme, imprint or rubric. The emphasis here is not on dictating the kinds of works published, but on nurturing the forms of organisation and conditions for diverse forms of publication that explore and reflect what humanities research is or could be, as opposed to the publication requirements of external bodies, funders,

administrators, and so on. This reflects what Sarah Kember describes as Goldsmiths Press's intention to 'open out against the current constraints posed by commercialisation, standardisation and audit' (Kember 2017, 1). Ultimately, the care-full commons is a way of rethinking the relationships involved in publishing in order to re-orient them in favour of a struggle for commonly-owned forms of production within publishing and higher education.

Within the commons, presses operate with different levels of autonomy and mutual-reliance. In accepting that scholar-led publishing projects tend to be small-scale and sustained often by gifted labour from working academics, researchers and activists, we need to think about the resilience of the care-full commons.

Commoning, as I have argued so far, is about relationships involved in the production of the commonly-owned resource and so extends beyond the boundaries of the individual project in question. Massimo De Angelis imagines the interactions between commons projects as vital for sustaining existing commons and creating new ones. 'Boundary commoning', for De Angelis, is 'the social force that creates and sustain commons ecologies' which produces 'structural coupling between and among different commons' (De Angelis 2017, 291). It refers to mutual reliance and cooperation between different commons – across the boundaries of one or more commons ('structural coupling') – to create something larger and more resilient while retaining each project's own 'identity, autonomy and autopoietic processes' (ibid, 293).

Boundary commons reflect the conception of the commons as a series of struggles by positioning each commons press or project as an autonomous structure while encouraging it to move beyond its boundaries to build solidarity with other projects. This recognises that OA is both unique to the commons at hand, but recognisable across commons boundaries as well. Framing open access in this way is the final development in my conception of OA as a boundary object. Now, conceived within a series of struggles, OA takes on a broader political role in the service of a solidarity economy towards an emancipatory common horizon. Boundary commoning reveals that commoning is a continual process of becoming that is intimately connected with the struggles of other commons projects. The notion of commoning as a process reflects its continual possibility and development, rather than a consensual, pre-defined project working towards a false or unachievable *telos*. Commoning can be thought of in this way as a political process

concerning the ways of relating to other OA projects that are constantly taking shape and forward-looking but situated as a practice in the present.

Common Resources in the Care-full Commons

Framing open access as a commons inevitably leads to the question of what the common resources are and who is allowed to use them. For the promotion of difference, the care-full commons is permanently in transition and non-essentialist. It is also unrealistic to expect the wholesale replacement of one form of individual property rights with collective rights. Rather than adopting a prescriptive approach to what is considered a common resource, there is room for many different conceptions that encourage different forms of collectivism, be they specifically positioned against the idea of copyright, such as the books published by *autonome media* whose authors refuse to accept copyright for their work, or in favour of digital resources that promote a public domain of collectively owned work. Alternatively, presses could experiment with different non-liberal and pro-commons licenses, such as the *Peer Production Licence*, a form of copyright licence developed by Dmytri Kleiner that is commonly use-able by worker-owned businesses and non-profits but for-profit companies must pay to use the resource (Kleiner 2010, 44). These examples of gifting work to a common pool are frequently enacted in the service of something emancipatory. From a variety of political perspectives, commoners may surrender the legal right to be attributed, or they may simply use copyright to further improve the common stock of resources. In neither case is the decision taken reflective of a fixed or static perspective that cannot change. In the absence of a wholesale move to a commonly-owned stock of property, various experiments with the commons are necessary to both produce common resources and illustrate that doing so is a way of resisting neoliberal publishing cultures.

Related to this is the common stock of resources for producing publications: free software, shared legal and technical resources, and pooled advice on different aspects of each press's operations. Pooling resources in this way mirrors the tactics of 'open cooperativism' whereby collectives use 'open design to co-create common tools and infrastructures to pursue social change' (Pazaitis, Kostakis, and Bauwens 2017, 189). Some commons projects go further by formalising arrangements to share surplus finance. Members in the Enspiral Network of cooperatives, for example,

commit 20% of all surplus to a common pool that is divided equally and can be spent however each project sees fit, thus strengthening mutual reliance and common efforts (ibid, 185). These practices are similar to the kinds of arrangements between presses described by Mattering Press whereby ownership of content could transfer to a different press if one should fold (Deville 2017, 5). Despite the forms of exclusion these arrangements entail, it is precisely because projects in the commons are self-governed that they can experiment with models of governance that are inclusive and do not benefit already powerful groups at the expense of minorities. The potential for experimentation into different tactics and governance of resource-sharing is the reason the commons is itself an interesting mode of organising.

Yet instead of making arguments against the tactics that presses employ to create and sustain a common stock of resources, or the purity of their politics, I am more concerned with how different collectives in the care-full commons display an outwardly-focused commitment to a common pool and why this is necessary over individualised ownership of publications and associated resources. More important than the common status of the resource is the duty of commoners to highlight where common resources are being exploited by capital, in order to present a coherent alternative (or series of alternatives) to non-commons-based forms of publishing. Different articulations of the commons are representative of the kinds of hegemonic interventions explored in Chapters 2 and 3 around the various conceptions of OA. Except that, unlike OA, the differing conceptions of the commons have the potential to more closely resemble an oppositional horizon based on emancipatory politics. OA, as the various governmental policies show, does not require a different mode of organisation for its production; whereas, as Vercellone describes above, the commons is inherently a different mode of self-governing organisation, even if this can be co-opted for neoliberal ends. Given this, experiments in the commons are more closely aligned with a transitional way of working and mode of production. The care-full commons therefore presents a different way of publishing that is predicated upon sharing both the outputs and resources for production within a common pool, as opposed to OA which does not presuppose any means of production beyond that which results in freely accessible literature.

This means that certain forms of organisation are better suited to projects operating from a first principle of commonly-owned publications and resources. Mayo Fuster Morell argues that commons organisations are informed not just by the

characteristics of the common resource but also by community characteristics, social norms, levels of openness (in the community and the resource), and rules for conflict resolution (Fuster Morell 2014, 284–301). These are helpful ways of thinking about the commons, though these descriptions should not be taken as fixed. Nor should they be considered deterministic, or decided in advance, as to the form of governance necessary in all situations. For example, the commoners involved in the care-full commons could include the producers, consumers and co-owners of their respective projects, comprising a diverse mixture of roles and areas of expertise, such as scholars, librarians, activists, artists, developers, designers and publishers, all working towards a shared horizon of common-ownership. Yet, as Esposito shows, the community is a site of ‘common non-belonging’ rather than any stable or permanent identity – it is only definable by the ‘lack that characterizes it’ (Esposito 2010, 16). A community necessarily entails dissensus and conflict that such commons projects need to account for in their governance and forms of organisation, ideally without recourse to vertical (hierarchical) forms of organisation that impose relationships based on power imbalances. Although horizontal ways of working may not automatically avoid such imbalances, these can be addressed in forms of governance that account for the necessity of conflict.

Horizontal organisation is not well equipped to deal with complex organisations and works best within and between small and simple communities of practice (Wenger 2010, 196). Because of this, much like the scholar-led presses, projects in the care-full commons should be small but could explore informal relationships and solidarity between other commons sites. This would also entail various levels of openness to newcomers, but ideally a general rule that interested participants should be able to contribute according to their abilities. Because of their outward-facing nature, commons projects would be recursive: consumers of information would themselves be encouraged to become commoners by gifting their labour instead of to private, non-commons-based publishing projects.

Care-full Commoning

Commoning in the care-full commons is inherently focused on the ways of relating around the common resource, prioritising care for the relationships between commoners and enabling new alternative forms of subjectivity than those created by

the neoliberal university and related forms of publishing. Many of the norms for participation in the commons will be informally determined by practices of commoning rather than formalised systems of governance. The commons site itself determines these norms without appealing to a predetermined set of commons values. As Elsa Noterman explains, ‘the potential of the commons perhaps then exists not in the development of a fixed organizational framework or rigid set of characterizations [...] but rather in the acknowledgement and mobilization of the differential commoning that emerges within, and on the periphery of, the collective management of shared resources’ (Noterman 2016). Commoning is therefore a situated practice that is highly individualised to the commons resource. Commons-based forms of open access publishing would entail different practices of commoning relevant to local contexts.

For example, scholar-led presses display a recognition of and commitment to local contexts through practices of care, as explored previously. A care-full approach to publishing is one that concentrates less on ends and more on means, prioritising the individual situations of those involved in each step of the process, the relationships between them and ensuring that they are all treated fairly and according to fair labour practices. Care also extends to forms of publishing that are sensitive to the research itself and not simply adherent to pre-determined categories and traditions, unlike the ‘choice’ offered by many market-based forms of publishing that does not consider the individual situations of either the people involved or the research being published. Care-full commoning takes this further by encouraging commoners to care beyond their own commons sites in the service of the emancipatory horizon of co-ownership across publishing and higher education. In addition to sharing resources with other projects, commoning also requires commoners to adopt an outwardly-focused, generous attitude to other commons projects, redirecting their labour away from proprietary, non-commons-based forms of publishing and projects that do not promote common ways of working. Such a standpoint is of course not easily achievable within the neoliberal university, which favours individual competitiveness, and so alternative subjectivities need to be cultivated and nurtured in order to create the conditions for common forms of working.

For Velicu and García López, drawing on the work of Judith Butler, subjectivities in the commons are bounded to those of other commoners. They argue:

‘a commoner-subjectivity is immersed in a variety of conscious and unconscious forms of identification, subjection and relations which have to be addressed more seriously as the contextual base of commoning, a form of human interdependency which makes us into ‘bounded-selves’ vulnerable to other socio-political forms of deprivation’ (Velicu and García-López 2018, 9). The formation of subjectivities, the authors recognise, is based on power relations within the commons that contain the possibility for ‘altruism/cooperation as well as harm/exploitation’ (ibid). Alongside rules for governance, these power relations can be addressed by prioritising subjectivities based on care and an obligation to fellow commoners. de la Bellacasa identifies three forms of subjectivity based on adopting a care-full approach to one another: *thinking-with*, *dissenting-within* and *thinking for* (Puig de la Bellacasa 2012, 199). *Thinking-with* ‘resists the individualization of thinking’ by recognising that all thought is constructed through collective knowledge makers; *dissenting-within* is the care for the effects of one’s critique, a vulnerability that seeks to place the critique-*r within* the site of their critique so they are not wholly detached from their words; while *thinking-for* is an intersectional commitment to ‘value the knowledge conceived through struggles in any context of subjugation’ (ibid, 208). *Thinking-for* is a particular commitment to recognising the ways in which forms of knowledge construction can ‘marginalize and oppress’ particular modes of existence.

Through more nuanced understandings of subjectivity, the conditions can be created for care-full interactions in the commons. Commoning in this context is one way of de-centring the individual, liberal, rational subject favoured by so many scholars of the commons (see above), in favour of an appreciation of subjectivity created by the ways of relating between commoners and the situatedness of the commons site itself. In turn, this emphasis on a different kind of human subjectivity has an effect on the kinds of humanities research published in the commons and the ways in which it is published. Experimentation is capable of creating new forms of humanities research outside of the structures of academic assessment that valorise single-authored, blind peer-reviewed, paper-centric works for their own sake, or for the sake of their symbolic capital. This means that the care-full commons experiments with what a humanities publication is or could be by dismantling, playing with and recreating the taken-for-granted categories of authorship, form, linear/rational argumentation and fixity – especially inasmuch as those categories can be reconsidered through abandoning proprietary ownership of scholarship.

Experimenting also extends to the *human* in the humanities and foregrounding works that politicise what it means to be human, based on commons subjectivities that may abandon ‘the humanities’ altogether in favour of something new and unexpected. For example, Rosi Braidotti theorises the ‘posthuman humanities’ as leaving behind the idea of ‘Man as the rational animal endowed with language’ in favour of: ‘a new set of narratives about the planetary dimension of globalized humanity; the evolutionary sources of morality; the future of our and other species; the semiotic systems of technological apparatus; the processes of translation underscoring the Digital Humanities; the role of gender and ethnicity as factors that index access to the posthuman predicament and the institutional implications of them all’ (Braidotti 2013, 162–63). These non-teleological, undetermined ways of re-conceptualising the humanities entail a politicising of the human and the humanities towards new, surprising and unexpected futures and identities. Having questioned the idea of the liberal subject in the commons itself, the care-full commons is a space for such politicisation.

Imagining the Care-full Commons

As a conclusion to this blueprint for the care-full commons, a good way of understanding the kinds of practices I am envisaging is to briefly imagine how they may differ from the scholar-led presses analysed in Chapter 4, whose values were the original inspiration for a commons-based ecosystem of OA publishers. Specifically, how might the scholar-led presses look if they were to be re-conceived in terms of the care-full commons? This requires a certain amount of imagination to picture such a state of affairs, especially as new ways of organising are *emergent* rather than fixed according to a particular plan. I will also not be considering funding models at this stage.

Let us assume that five scholar-led, humanities monograph publishers fully adopted a commons-based mode of organisation along the lines described above. Each is small in size, containing maybe four or five researchers looking after the operations, but extends out towards disciplinary communities for editorial support (for peer review, copyediting, etc.). Presses represent different disciplinary approaches, methodologies and understandings of the humanities, thus exercising levels of organisational autonomy, but they are united in their commitment to

commonly owned forms of publishing. Each press is a commons project whose outputs are openly accessible through the removal of intellectual property rights. They may licence their work through some form of peer-production licence intended to maintain and strengthen the common pool. Similarly, the resources used are commonly produced and owned: software and data is placed into common ownership, as are legal resources such as contracts, and best practice guidance is created and shared between all presses. Books may be produced according to shared typesetting standards and information is shared about the successes and failures of various experiments. Each press therefore maintains its own recognisable structure and identity while benefitting from forms of solidarity that arise from their mutual reliance.

Such a situation of a small number of presses supporting one another as a commons would reflect what Kostakis and Bauwens term ‘lifeboat strategies’. Lifeboating is a way for local communities to support one and ‘try to be immune to the dominant system’, rather than necessarily confronting it on a large scale (Kostakis and Bauwens 2014, 48). Described in terms of ‘resilient communities’, lifeboating prefigures a more large-scale global commons movement that the authors argue calls for political and social upheaval on a local, national and global scale. Kostakis and Bauwens are sparse on the details of how this transition could occur. Suffice it to say that it has to start locally, as much of this chapter has argued. This localism contrasts with platform-based solutions and so-called accelerationist politics. Accelerationism decries the ineffective strategies of mere ‘folk politics’ that, as Srnicek and Williams write, can only provide ‘temporary respite against its onslaught’ (Srnicek and Williams 2015, ‘Defining Folk Politics’). But global, centralised, platform-based approaches to the commons cannot currently account for the local situations of commoners, their nuanced forms of commoning or care within the commons site. So small, decentralised projects need to be nurtured and brought about for a series of global struggles. As David De Agarte writes, platform versions of cooperativism essentially mean ‘cooperativism without community, and therefore without learning, without knowledge shared and developed in common’ (De Ugarte 2017). Irrespective of whether the care-full commons transitions to something more global, it needs to start from local projects and work outwards.

The five presses in our imaginary care-full commons are therefore held together by the practices of care-full commoning in their community. They are able

to rely on each other as fellow commoners for advice and resources, thus adopting a more resilient attitude in the service of something emancipatory and taking individual situations into account. This caring attitude also extends outwards to promote generous commons-based practices within the university and society more generally. As a way of demonstrating the value of commoning, the scholars within the care-full commons would adopt commoning as a way of working, withdrawing labour from traditional commercial publishing practices in favour of those promoting a commons framework. This also requires the need to reflect on how best to re-direct efforts from traditional competitive practices within and between universities and towards common ones, joining up with efforts for commons-based education in and outside the traditional academy (more in the next chapter). The care-full commons does not necessarily require *more* work, though it may do in its infancy. Rather, it appeals to commoners (especially those in relative financial security) to divert and gift their labour towards commons projects. Labour issues would always be a site of struggle in the commons; it is not a zero-sum game between labour performed for commons and non-commons-based projects.

Nevertheless, unlike the scholar-led presses analysed previously, projects in the care-full commons maintain formalised systems of collaboration, labour- and resource-sharing. Through processes of boundary commoning, the five presses extend outwards to other commons-based publishing commons, such as those housed within university presses or libraries, in order to represent a coherent counter-hegemonic alternative to market-based forms of publishing. This strengthens their resilience within institutional settings and sets up new ways of working with pre-existing institutions, potentially creating new institutional arrangements and avenues for commoning in the process, encouraging others to participate in the process. Yet larger boundary commons would likely lead to more disputes and disagreements due to the numbers of people involved and their numerous, divergent struggles. These would be addressed through dispute resolution mechanisms and assembly forms of governance so as to ensure such forms of collaboration were democratic and accountable. Of course, a certain amount of conflict and dissent is necessary and may be productive in the care-full commons.

These are just some of the features of an alternative system of publishing I am terming the care-full commons, strategies for the realisation of which will be explored in the final chapter. As an emergent ecosystem, the features described are

by no means exhaustive and require more research, particularly from a practical perspective. Yet they are distinct from the scholar-led presses who operate under stricter divisions of labour and competition for scarce resources. Part of the purpose of the care-full commons would be to reduce the need to compete with other projects for rivalrous resources, which would be shared more equitably than they are now, while the creation of non-rivalrous resource would be gifted to the commons.

Conclusion

Through this highly speculative discussion I have argued that the care-full commons could return control and ownership to researchers in the service of a common horizon. It is positioned as a series of struggles, with scholar-led publishers (and other related projects) mutually reliant on one another while striving to maintain their own autonomy to experiment with their own praxis. This operates within a loosely defined political horizon of returning control of publishing to the commons in a way that is flexible enough to permit experimental forms of organising and practicing, but rigid enough to create a feeling of solidarity among commoners. Framed in this way, as an attitude that encourages care and diversity, the care-full commons looks quite different to many contemporary forms of publishing that are not controlled by scholars nor acting in the best interests of humanities scholarship.

Nevertheless, I have also tried to avoid framing the care-full commons in solutionist terms; it is not a project to be rolled out in order to fix the ills of publishing. Instead it is a way of thinking about the relationships involved with how humanities scholars publish and distribute their work. It is a familiar position adopted by some open access advocates (such as the liberal accounts of the commons described in the first section of this chapter) that the solution to the crisis of commercial publishing is collective action through new forms of agreed-upon organisations and institutions. Not only does this fail to account for how entrenched the current system of publishing is, such a stance also assumes that a consensus on collective action can be achieved and maintained without more powerful groups imposing their wills on others. This is especially important given the diversity of practices and projects I have illustrated that cannot be reduced so that one size fits all. Instead, I am trying to highlight where the values of the care-full commons already exist, either explicitly or in a latent form, and take them further as a counter-

hegemonic alternative based on practices of mutual reliance. The care-full commons could thus accommodate dissensus, antagonism and pragmatic decision-making in the service of a broader political aim – it is neither a solution nor a thing of purity, but is better thought of as varieties of organisation that prioritise relationships over outcomes.

Given this framing, the next and concluding chapter of the thesis makes recommendations on the strategies and forms of organisations needed to encourage such a commons at both grassroots and institutional levels. Having illustrated in Chapter 3 how the UK governmental funding agencies have treated OA as something to be mandated, I propose a different way of thinking about OA as something to be facilitated through funding scholar-led, library-led and university-led presses, all based on the values put forward here, while reintroducing the possibility for policymakers to make a positive contribution to this ecosystem.

Conclusion. Recommendations and future research

Over the course of the preceding chapters I have explored and assessed the values and practices of two distinct approaches to OA within the humanities, policy-driven and scholar-led, situating them against the wider backdrop of the move to OA. This has allowed me to argue for reconceiving OA in the humanities along the lines of the commons, grounded in an ethic of care, that foregrounds the situations of participants in the publication process over any particular commitment to a pre-determined understanding of what publishing is. The care-full commons simultaneously promotes difference, while being positioned towards a shared horizon of common ownership of the infrastructures and outputs of scholarly communication.

As a way of concluding the thesis, this final chapter summarises the argument and then extends outwards to recommend strategies for actualising the potential of OA as a kind of care-full commons. These recommendations look beyond scholar-led versions of OA and into other areas for collaboration with libraries and university presses, through the practices of boundary commoning described in the previous chapter. Recommendations also illustrate the need for future research into commons practices within higher education and the humanities, something out of the scope of this thesis but necessary to fully enable commoning within the institutions that humanities research is produced and assessed.

Summary of research

In the first chapters of the thesis, I presented OA as responding to a culture of publishing in the humanities that is rooted in tradition and determined principally by the need for researchers to publish in prestigious venues in order to advance their careers. This enforces a conservative publishing practice on humanities researchers dictated by the commercial publishing industry comprised of a small number of large multi-national corporations and a large number of small presses. Academics sustain this industry the labour they provide in the service of authorship, editing and peer-

reviewing. As competition for secure employment in the contemporary neoliberal university intensifies, so too does the need for researchers to publish more and provide more free labour for publishers who then sell content back to the academic community at prices university libraries are increasingly unable to afford. This means that the ways in which academic research is published is strongly dictated by publishers – with tacit consent from academic institutions – which prevents experimentation and engagement with a range of assumptions around publishing practices, such as form, authorship and fixity. Thus, it is the current political economy of publishing itself that works against the possibilities of academics critically engaging with the politics of their own publishing practices, especially new ways of providing research access.

OA was originally conceived as both a solution to the extractive power of academic publishers and a way to explore the potential of publishing enabled by digital technologies, though in many ways it ends up conforming to the extractive business models of commercial publishers who profit from article-processing charges subsidised by the UK government. As shown in Chapter 2, the histories of OA reveal it is a concept with multiple meanings and histories, across a number of disciplines, and does not reflect a stable politics or ideology. It is the conceptual fluidity of OA – framed as a boundary object – that permits different understandings of OA while maintaining its recognisable identity that allows collaboration between communities. The different understandings of OA are not always consensual and can reflect substantial disagreement on both its definition and the strategies for its implementation. Attempts to construct and impose different understandings of OA were framed as a hegemonic interventions, borrowing from the work of Mouffe and Laclau, which represent one actor's attempt to articulate OA in such a way to control the flexibility of the concept. These disagreements reflect ordinary antagonisms within a community that OA is able to accommodate, but only if it is not enclosed in accordance with the wishes of a more powerful group at the expense of others. OA thus represents a series of critical struggles rather than a grand plan to be rolled out according to one group's vision.

Yet by mandating a particular kind of OA that indiscriminately applies to all researchers, the governmental policies do represent exactly this kind of closure. From an analysis of the creation and implementation of the policies it is clear that the funding agencies see their role as 'increasing eyes on research papers' in a way that

either stimulates a new market for APC-based publishing (the RCUK policy), based on public funds, or requires universities to provide a significant amount labour to maintain the infrastructure for repository-based access that is subject to embargos dictated by publishers (the HEFCE policy). In either scenario, OA is required to conform to the neoliberal logic of ‘choice’, measuring policy interventions in accordance with the extent to which they conform to market measurement, meaning that OA must above all favour the commercial publishing industry. Humanities disciplines are largely excluded from participation in APC-based publishing, as the majority of their work is not grant-funded, and so are forced to participate in a watered-down version of OA that is associated with the much-maligned Research Excellence Framework.

In addition to the governmental policy framework, I have also shown that there exists a separate value system for OA that is embedded in the practices of the scholar-led publishers analysed in Chapter 4. These presses approach OA as important to their practices, as something that enables a range of publishing practices by returning control to scholars themselves, but not necessarily as the intended end result of publication. Such an understanding of OA as *processual* illustrates how it can facilitate a diversity of practices reflective of a range of commitments and practices that are determined by humanities researchers themselves, as opposed to external bodies. Through a range of non-commercial, non-competitive and experimental approaches to humanities publishing, the presses represent a counter-hegemonic unit that reframes OA as an emancipatory project embodying the values most resembling commons-based forms of resource management, such as collaboration, democratic self-governance, resilience and, most significantly for the purposes of this thesis, an ethics of care. Individual presses foreground a commitment to care in various aspects of their operations, such as care of the self, of others, of the processes and labour involved in the publishing process, and for the final publication.

The scholar-led presses’ commitment to a logic of care contrasts with the governmental policies’ commitment to a logic of choice, theorised through the work of Annemarie Mol. The analysis in Chapter 5 reveals how the policies promote an *outcomes-focused* understanding of OA that, in associating it with instruments of competition and assessment, treats researchers as rational, freely acting individuals seeking to maximise their gains in a marketplace. On the other hand, the scholar-led

presses prioritise a commitment to the *cultures* of how humanities research is produced and published, in a way that is less concerned with individual choice and more with nurturing collective benefits through care of our situatedness as subjects. The difference is well illustrated by Annemarie Mol: ‘In one way or another a market requires that the product that changes hands in a transaction must be clearly defined. It must have a beginning and an end. In the logic of care, by contrast, care is an interactive, open-ended process that may be shaped and reshaped depending on its results’ (Mol 2008, 20). The scholar-led presses therefore recognise that humanities research (and publishing) is a situated and iterative practice, while the governmental policies draw a limit on the form of OA that researchers are required to take or leave (though of course, their freedom to do so is limited given their practical constraints as academics).

In valuing the relationships and practices of care in the service of a common horizon of researcher-controlled publishing, I have illustrated that scholar-led presses closely represent the values of commons forms of organisation. A commons is not merely a resource, or the formalised systems of governance around this resource, but also the informal cultures of collaboration and working non-competitively in the general struggle for commons forms of organisation (termed *commoning*). Importantly, the commons is not a consensual ‘third way’ between the market and state, as Ostrom and other liberal theorists influenced by her work imply (Ostrom 2010), but cannot entirely escape either domain. It is not a form of organisation that is ‘outside of the market’ or ‘anti-neoliberal’, as Lawson terms (Forthcoming, 229), but just as entangled with it as other forms of organisation. Nor is the commons a neat ‘solution’ to the problems created by marketised publishing, as it is sometimes framed (Bosman et al. 2017, 1), but a way of organising that prioritises common ownership in the general struggle for more emancipatory forms of political organisation within publishing, higher education and society more generally. The practices of *commoning* can also extend outside the commons itself and into care and mutual reliance in other forms of organisation. *Commoning* is thus a helpful way of framing the relationships in progressive approaches to publishing because it does not entail a wholesale move from one system of publishing to another, but encourages the cultivation of a commoner’s attitude to our relationships and projects in the service of a general struggle for more common forms of organisation. This is why I illustrate the scholar-led presses as displaying the values

of commoning even if they are not a self-described ‘commons’ per se. The commons is a process of permanent struggle.

As a way of imagining their potential for encouraging alternatives to the current publishing hegemony, I theorised the kinds of values and practices displayed in scholar-led publishing as the ‘care-full commons’. The care-full commons is a more formalised commons-based ecosystem of OA publishing that is owned and governed by the communities it serves. As a decentralised ecosystem of OA presses in the humanities, the care-full commons consists of small publishing projects that maintain autonomous identities but build resilience through sharing resources and expertise with one another. This is achieved through non-competitive, horizontal alliances that work towards resilience by encouraging other humanities researchers to divert their labour away from commercial publishing and towards efforts within the care-full commons. Although labour issues in the care-full commons are themselves a site of struggle, the scholar-led presses are already able to rely on the gifted labour of colleagues and their extended networks and so the purpose is to further support this work that is already being achieved with minimal resources. The care-full commons therefore exists in a latent form but needs cultivating and supporting in order to build momentum and encourage others to participate.

Reconsidering Open Access

How, then, should we think about the radical potential of OA for the futures of humanities publishing? I have interrogated OA in the humanities from a critical standpoint that sought to move beyond a picture of OA as promoted by either techno-solutionist optimists or resisted by those objecting to the commercialisation of publishing that OA can facilitate. More nuance is required from those seeking to resist the effects of neoliberalism in publishing: OA can represent a broad range of political positions, practices and ideologies and does not necessarily restate the values of market measurement. When embedded in the praxis of how humanities research is conducted and produced, in the service of a commons-based horizon of researcher ownership, OA can represent something quite different to commercial, privately-owned, APC-based forms of publishing that prioritise access to research and entail nothing more. Public access to research results and papers may be good, but it is probably not worth its incremental benefits compared to the upheaval and

homogenisation entailed by large, all-encompassing, profit-based approaches to OA provided through policies and platforms. In fact, policy mandates such as the HEFCE policy have the distinct potential to alienate researchers from exploring open practices, or critically reflecting on their own publication practices, simply because mandates are punitive and associated with much-loathed bureaucratic assessment exercises. In particular, compliance with the HEFCE policy is a huge undertaking, requiring additional invisible and unrewarded labour from librarians and researchers, and results in a form of OA that is diluted through embargos and does not engage with many of the motivations for OA that seek systemic change in publishing.

Does this mean that OA as a movement or series of movements in the humanities is currently a failure? My research has shown that this is not the case; OA is still nascent and is at least on the agenda in a number of different community-based and progressive arenas. The governmental policies in the UK are clearly not representative of all possible policy interventions, but are an indicative instead of what happens when regulatory bodies enclose the idea of OA for convenience or to bring about a particular state of affairs. Nonetheless, I maintain that OA itself – in whatever form it is understood – should not be the primary aim of policy interventions. Instead, policies should look to bring about a variety of publishing cultures that may or may not result in OA, but focus on the kinds of care-based practices, critical experiments and scholar ownership/governance of publishing infrastructures that I argue for throughout. This does not mean that OA is not important, as research access is clearly something worth facilitating, but that it should not be the *raison d'être* of all publishing reform. This is especially clear when viewed in the light of how many separate policies currently exist at the international level. Policy-makers around the globe have been sold the idea that they should do whatever they can to facilitate ‘open access’ without attending to the cultures (and politics) of knowledge production. In fact, as I write, European policymakers are attempting to homogenise and ‘join up’ their national OA policies through what they are terming ‘Plan S’ (Else 2018). While I do not have the space to analyse this intervention in any detail, it is clear to me that OA policies should intend to promote difference rather than the same hegemonic form of public access to research across Europe (and beyond).

Instead, as theorised in Chapter 2 via the work of Adema and Hall (2013), the development of OA is best conceived as a series of critical struggles rather than the

rolling out of a grand plan for ‘open’ versus ‘closed’ forms of access. More action is therefore needed to stimulate these struggles for researcher ownership of the infrastructures for publishing; not just access to the outputs at the behest of the publishing industry, but cultural change that promotes better researcher governance of it too. Scholar-led publishing represents this possibility and it is here that OA advocacy should focus its efforts. In addition to the ecosystem of small, mutually resilient presses analysed here, advocates should look to facilitate scholar ownership and governance of publishing infrastructures in a range of pre-existing institutions, such as libraries, university presses and other partnerships (more in the next section).

This means that OA as a concept would benefit from further complication or reorientation towards models that also entail common ownership. I have already shown that many scholar-led presses consider ‘open access’ an important feature of their work that couples well with their other political and ethical commitments, rather than reflecting the end point of their operations. A richer concept of OA would suggest its potential instrumental benefits or more ethical means of production (such as the care-full commons described previously). Yet the need to further complicate OA might also mean that ‘open access’ has been exhausted as a useful term, even for denoting freely accessible research, because it does not entail anything about the ways in which the research itself is *opened*. As I argued in Chapter 2, as a boundary object, OA possesses enough conceptual flexibility to have facilitated a movement in favour of public access to research. OA is understood differently by various communities but has enough of a structure for advocates to rally around it. The term’s flexibility was one of the factors that allowed the development of such a heterogeneous OA movement, but was also what gave it enough critical mass to influence government policy (as such a diverse range of actors were agitating for it). However, ‘open access’ as a term of advocacy has likely run its course for those seeking to encourage a complex, agonistic, emancipatory ecosystem of OA projects based on a plurality of approaches.

As a way of moving beyond the ambiguities or co-option of ‘open access’, advocates could instead focus on creating a series of terms that *do* entail common ownership and care-full publishing practices. Perhaps a focus on the commons is needed for OA to couple with those already exploring alternative and commons-based forms of organisation within higher education, the art industry, the urban landscape and society more generally. For example, the forms of self-organisation

and experimental practice on display in the 2018 UK higher education strikes would be an opportunity to connect the two movements, as Joe Deville explores (2018). This would move away from the idea that ‘open access’ is the be-all and end-all of new systems of publishing and illustrate its emancipatory potential when coupled with other movements. In fact, I would argue that advocates rallying around the concept of OA may have had the detrimental effect of prioritising an oversimplified idea that the publishing industry is the source of all problems with research dissemination, which would be fixed by providing free access to academic research. In actuality, the causes are deeper and rooted in a number of different institutions that have been shaped by neoliberal governmental policy since the 1980s.

Irrespective of terminology, it is clear that emancipatory models for OA publishing in the humanities cannot be achieved by scholar-led publishing alone, or by publishers on their own for that matter, and require coupling with movements for change in higher education and other areas in society. Framing OA a commons allows for a broadening of the struggle not just for access to research – or fairer systems of publishing – but towards commons forms of organisation and praxis in a range of locations throughout the university. This strategy may require engagement with current institutions, such as the traditional university, university presses and research funders, but it might also necessitate the creation of new institutions for publishing and higher education embodying an altogether different and experimental kind of value and organisation not yet explored. The following sections make recommendations for how to best nurture publishing based on the values of collectivity and commonality, putting forward a research agenda for commoning within higher education as the next frontier for the commons in the humanities.

Recommendations

The strategies for reconceiving OA publishing in the humanities as a kind community-owned, care-full commons based on collectivity and mutual reliance need to consider a range of pre-existing positions and organisations that currently shape humanities publication practices and prevent change by collective action. Scholar-led OA publishing responds to a variety of the problems with current publishing practices in the humanities, though its influence is limited without support from other actors connected to publishing, the humanities and the university

itself. Rather than confronting the dominant publishing hegemony head-on, as a war to be won, the commons will be best cultivated as an ongoing process of encouraging new affective attitudes and relationships in a number of locations. This amounts to a series of attempts to change the ‘common sense’ of publishing, a Gramscian term previously introduced in Chapter 5, as employed by Mouffe, to illustrate how a ‘particular conception of the world is established and a specific understanding of reality is defined [...] which provides the terrain in which specific forms of subjectivity are constructed’ (Mouffe 2013, 89).

The current common sense of publishing is largely shaped by neoliberal individualism, as has been stressed throughout (but particularly in the first chapter), and participation in commercial forms of publishing that lead to individual gain through prestige and credit. The common sense of humanities publishing is illustrated starkly in the discrepancy between the kinds of critique written by humanities academics and the manner in which they tend to be published. Those writing in disciplinary traditions that deal specifically with critiques of neoliberalism and its effects, such as radical politics, commons research and critical theory, are required to publish in ways determined by the very structures and modes of organisation that they themselves critique in their work, a point also explored in depth by Gary Hall (2016a, 1–23). This situation reflects a conflict between the academic common sense, which encourages a reality that is critical of neoliberal modes of organisation, and the publishing common sense that specifically requires academics to conform to it. How, then, is it possible to nurture cultures of publishing that better reflect a range of theoretical outlooks and collective approaches to scholarship, such as those promoted by commons-based publishing? Put another way, how is it possible to bring about the conditions for a ‘care-full commons’ explored in the previous chapter?

Scholar-led publishing

Scholar-led publishing has been theorised so far as representing an alternate series of values to the current publishing hegemony. Scholar-led presses could form the basis for a solidarity economy in the service of common, researcher ownership of publishing. Presses have the potential to group themselves under an umbrella organisation so as to formalise alliances and promote mutual reliance between one

another. This is one way of promoting a positive vision of collective and experimental approaches to OA rather than a merely reactionary strategy based on boycotts of closed access, commercial publishers, which characterises so much OA advocacy. In uniting themselves under an organisational banner, scholar-led publishers illustrate that different ways of organising scholarly communications are both possible and already being explored in a number of different sites. This is being undertaken in the communities that academics already trust – their own colleagues and peers – and not privately-owned companies to whom they are beholden for their career progress.

One example of such an umbrella organisation is the Radical Open Access Collective (ROAC). A collective of over 45 scholar-led presses, which I was originally involved in helping to organise, the ROAC reflects an ecosystem of publishers that prioritise diversity, care, experimentation, underrepresented cultures and critiques of openness and the status quo (Radical Open Access Collective 2017). Through a web presence, mailing list and attendance at relevant meetings, the ROAC acts as both a source of identity for scholar-led publishers and a showcase of their work and publications. This builds solidarity and encourages presses to support one another through sharing expertise, resources and lessons learned from successful and failed experiments. Presses may also collaborate on shared funding bids for open-source infrastructure design or research into financial models (e.g., openAIRE 2018), all of which would benefit the community at large and not just the individual presses themselves. In the future, the community of presses plans to create a toolkit commons that will include guidance and advice for starting and running an OA publishing operation, containing legal and technical resources, documentation on best practices in publishing and other information that each press can contribute to and update (Adema and Moore 2018).

Collectives such as the ROAC can help to change the common sense by presenting a diverse set of scholar-led presses as a coherent alternative to traditional publishing. This operates on a number of different levels: firstly by increasing solidarity and reliance between the presses, which strengthens their individual resilience outside the collective; secondly, collectives legitimise each press's operations in a way that helps to encourage others to either associate themselves with the collective or to create their own, thus creating a snowball effect that strengthens as it expands; finally, collectives can encourage others to divert their labour from

commercial forms of publishing to support commons-based and progressive initiatives. Scholar-led publishing is sustained not just through new presses joining but by authors, editors and reviewers withdrawing and redirecting their efforts to pre-existing presses too.

Yet while collectives such as the ROAC may help change the common sense in favour of scholar-led forms of publishing, we have already seen that scholar-led publishers in general do not consider themselves contributing to a ‘commons’ in the manner described in the previous chapter. The idea of the commons requires further articulation and promotion in a multiplicity of nodal sites, amounting to a kind of Gramscian ‘war of position’ that, as Mouffe argues with respect to radical politics more generally, involves ‘establishing a synergy between a plurality of actors’ in both grassroots and party forms of organisation (Mouffe 2013, 75), as opposed to an outright, centralised revolution. This synergy, for my purposes, is best thought of as a kind of commoning across boundaries and between institutions so as to incorporate ideas of the commons and researcher ownership in a number of different struggles. Boundary commoning, as was theorised previously with respect to the work of De Angelis, allows the boundaries of one commons site to blend with another, thus creating new forms of solidarity through social cooperation. These blurred boundaries could constitute shared physical infrastructure or commoner participation across projects in a way that makes the ‘complexity’ of one commons site available to the other (De Angelis 2017, 292).

For example, scholar-led publishing need not simply stand alone as a model in itself but can couple with library-led and university press publishing to create new forms of organisation positioned towards a common horizon. No doubt there are similar moves towards a more progressive, if not actual commons-based, model of scholarly communication within and across libraries and university presses. A great deal of effort and finance is being spent on transforming publishing in this regard, such as through Andrew W. Mellon Foundation-funded initiatives, the Library Publishing Coalition or the Association of University Presses (D. J. Waters 2016; Lippincott 2016). Many of these projects develop open-source tools for community use and development, like the University of Minnesota Press’s ‘Manifold’ software for producing open-access, born-digital, long-form scholarly works (Manifold n.d.), while others share best practices and guidance as collaborators rather than competitors. For example, in a library context David Ghamandi argues for a

‘cooperative of cooperatives and independent publishers’ based in a variety of kinds of institution: ‘library publishers, scholarly societies, journals, academic institutions, and funders’ all working on the basis of ‘cooperation and solidarity’ (Ghamandi 2018, 11). Yet, resource-sharing in these membership coalitions also represents an area of competition in which much of the best-practice documentation are regarded as ‘trade secrets’ that are consequently shared with members only. Agitators for the commons would need to engage with membership organisations to convince them of the benefits of adopting a more commons-based approach to their resources.

The possibilities of changing the cultures of university press and library-led publishing are perhaps more plausible in the current climate in which publishing is undergoing change in a variety of contexts. For example, there has been a huge resurgence in UK based university presses in the past five years, many of which are entirely OA and operate collaboratively within and across institutions (the White Rose Press consortium is a good example of this kind of cross-institutional university press). A recent report by Adema, Stone and Keene shows how many of the newly launched university presses are predicated on a non-profit, open access philosophy and survive through institutional subsidy rather than purely commercial practices (Adema, Stone, and Keene 2017). The surveyed presses displayed a strong desire to collaborate, particularly on a toolkit of shared resources and how-to guides, suggesting a good ideological overlap between new university presses and scholar-led, commons-based publishing (Adema, Stone, and Keene 2017, Figure 26). Through collaboration and participation across one another’s projects the scholar-led presses could embed part of their operations in the library and university presses publishing programmes (and vice versa). Participation could take the form of shared production processes or representation on one another’s advisory boards in a way that preserves autonomy of individual projects but strengthens resilience of the ecosystem as a whole.

Through these practices of boundary commoning, scholar-led, library-led and university press-led publishing could further strengthen as a coherent counter-hegemonic bloc in order to return control of publishing from commercial vendors and towards researcher ownership. However, this would not be enough to move towards a commons-based conception of ownership along the lines described in the previous chapter. Universities in particular are competitive institutions and would be reluctant to make a wholesale move to a commons framework that would see them

surrender their intellectual property. Embedding forms of collaboration within the university space through grassroots forms of organisation is one way of changing the culture of competition from the inside and signalling to the administration that working collectively across boundaries is a strategy worth pursuing. Moving to a collaborative approach to higher education will affect more than just publishing, however, and strategies for broadening the commons to the university more generally will need to be explored (as the final section of this chapter argues).

What this shows is that in order to create the conditions for commons-based forms of ownership for higher education and publishing, commoners will have to engage with current institutions for publishing, the university and politics more generally, rather than simply withdrawing from pre-existing institutions in order to create something new and pure. Returning to the work of Chantal Mouffe, we can view this strategy as prioritising critique as ‘hegemonic engagement with’ over critique as ‘withdrawal from’ (Mouffe 2013, 66–77). A strategy of engaging with institutions, as described here, involves both critique and then a re-articulation of how the institution might bring about the desired cultures. Engagement reflects the need to critique how institutions reflect a certain constructed reality so as to articulate a new one, whereas withdrawal, Mouffe argues, is founded upon a flawed understanding of politics that does not take into account the ‘ineradicable dimension of antagonism’ that will always prevent unification around a single project or plan without exclusion. Ultimately, then, a strategy of withdrawal treats the state as a ‘monolithic apparatus of domination that cannot be transformed’, which is exactly what hegemonic engagement shows to be false (Mouffe 2013, 78).

This means that rather than withdrawing from the policy sphere, advocates for commons-based systems of publishing should continue to engage with it, especially while OA is actually on the policy agenda for governments, funders and universities. Scholar-led and commons-based publishing therefore exists not just as critiques of the status quo, but also as a series of projects that can articulate emancipatory futures for publishing and influence others to engage with them, but particularly those in power. It is worth looking at how commoners could influence the OA policy landscape in the UK (and beyond) so that policymakers may value an ethic of commoning in their processes and objects of policy.

Open access policy

As illustrated throughout the thesis, the UK policy landscape for OA is complex but, in essence, promotes a philosophy behind OA that is beholden to the commercial publishing industry, either by stimulating a culture of article-processing charges or conceding to publisher demands for repository-based access with lengthy embargoes. The governmental funding agencies' approach to OA is inextricably bound by the need to ensure that commercial enterprise is not disadvantaged by (and ideally benefits from) such policy interventions. This means that the commons, which seeks to return control from shareholders to scholarly communities, is not a natural fit for the current government's neoliberal ideology. Still, this will not change without confrontation and so alternative forms of commons-based OA should continue to directly engage with governmental policy where possible, both through informal routes such as conferences and publications aimed at policymakers and formal consultations in response to requests for input. Much of this can be undertaken by umbrella organisations mentioned above, such as the Radical Open Access Collective, so as to present a consistent, unified voice for change (where agreement is possible).

One opportunity for influencing change would be the open access policy for the Research Excellence Framework after next (post-2027), which HEFCE recently announced will be extended to include 'long-form scholarly works and monographs', although the detail of the policy is 'very much up for discussion' (Hill 2018). This opens up a space for arguments in favour of the commons, or at least scholar-led forms of publishing that rely on the values of commoning, and allows projects with similar values and outlooks to rally around a particular response. Part of the response to policy consultations may be defensive, such as pointing out why a book-processing charge model of publishing (certainly one without a cap on the amount) would simply divert public money into the hands of commercial publishers. But scholar-led and other progressive projects would also have to adopt what De Angelis terms a 'relational stance which is not just to 'say no'' but to 'engage in constituent practices' that bring about change in favour of commoning (if not necessarily the commons) and something positive rather than merely defensive (De Angelis 2017, 312). This might mean that the commons is too politically alien to neoliberal policymakers but practices of 'commoning' may not be, if presented correctly.

For example, I have already argued that care-full practices in publishing are closely related to those of commoning. One way of advancing a commons-based agenda would be to illustrate where the governmental policies could have a positive impact based on care for labour, supply chains, infrastructures, local contexts, and other such issues that the existing policies fail to account for. These arguments could be based on highlighting the amount of invisible labour that is already being undertaken by librarians in the service of the HEFCE policy and showing why a strategy founded on care could have avoided such a state of affairs. In doing this, scholar-led presses would find an ally in the university itself, through librarians and administrators concerned at the amount of labour required to meet the policy demands. Building allegiances in this way would help problematise the policies in terms of labour issues and would show how care for relationships, rather than a mere focus on end products, is vital in policymaking.

Nevertheless, as illustrated in Chapter 2, OA is less suitable as an object of policy mandates that enclose the concept of OA in accordance with a particular worldview and associate OA with disciplinary exercises. But policy does not simply involve mandating changes in behaviour through compliance measures; this can be achieved through facilitating experimentation too. As Chapter 3 illustrated, Ben Johnson of HEFCE did show ‘some sympathy’ with the need for HEFCE to facilitate experimentation in open practices through funding a range of small projects to this effect. In continuing to make themselves visible as a coherent unit, scholar-led projects would be well-placed to benefit from this kind of funding. Such investment would be in contrast to strategies pursued by the Wellcome Trust, Gates Foundation and European Commission, all of whom are adopting platform-based, commercial solutions for OA with an end point of making papers freely available, rather than necessarily changing the cultures of publishing for the better (Science Magazine 2017). Work would be needed to show why ecosystems of small presses such as the Radical Open Access Collective and Library Publishing Coalition are better than all-encompassing, monopoly-seeking platforms for OA precisely because they do not treat OA as an end point or prefigure a certain homogeneous understanding it.

In this respect, government policy should focus on promoting a large number of small initiatives rather than a small number of large ones, encouraging universities to divert funding towards scholar-led experimentation in publishing and away from commercial services that facilitate policy compliance. This could be based on

models for library consortia funding, such as Knowledge Unlatched and Open Library of Humanities, whereby libraries contribute small amounts to a bigger pot that is then divided by a certain number of projects (Eve 2014a). However, these kinds of initiatives have the possibility to funnel large sums of money to organisations that then determine how the money is spent, which has a centralising tendency and can work against individual project autonomy (in the absence of good governance). For instance, Knowledge Unlatched unilaterally decides all the costs relating to the publishing consortium, rather than letting individual presses decide this and potentially reducing the cost for libraries. Such consortia funding can therefore have unintended homogenising effects that come with viewing OA as a ‘transition’ from one system of publishing to another, predefined one.

Influencing policy would be possible by building alliances between institutions and working to engage head-on with policymakers through both consultations and less direct routes that contribute to changing the common sense through consistent and regular messaging aimed at a range of audiences. Such tactics also require a nuanced understanding of the state as more than just a monolithic, static entity but a complicated and dynamic set of relations with multiple entry points and areas for influence. Even if the current government is largely unamenable to forms of collective and common ownership, in the UK at least, there is a need for advocates to position themselves for future governments that may be receptive to such ideas, by continuing to articulate and practice alternative ways of publishing based on a commons horizon.

Of course, these recommendations exist within the current paradigm of the marketised university. Reorienting publishing practices towards a more care-full commons environment cannot occur without imagining broader transformations in higher education, particularly in how publications are assessed and valued in the academy. Scholar-led and commons-based forms of publishing might be able to illustrate the potential for something emancipatory within the humanities, but little will change if the university continues to be a site of increased marketization and commercial practice in which scarce employment opportunities shape publication practices and incentivise overwork and competition. Publishing practices will not be changed in favour of a collective, common good without a more horizontally strategic approach to the commons and collective governance in higher education. More research is therefore needed to better understand collective forms of

governance and the possibilities of commoning in the humanities and the university site itself, which would in turn facilitate commons-based practices in publishing.

Future research

Collective governance of publishing infrastructures

Underpinning this research is the need to think through the practicalities of commons governance of scholarly communications. Firstly, what forms of governance work within small scholar-led, commons-based publishing projects? Is it even possible to generalise any governance system without homogenisation of local contexts? This calls for engagement with existing forms of non-shareholder governance, both formal and informal, alongside models for understanding how local contexts entail certain kinds of governance, such as Elinor Ostrom's 'Institutional Analysis and Diversity Framework' (Hess and Ostrom 2007, 49–81). However, as explored in the previous chapter, Ostrom's work alone is likely to be insufficient due to its overemphasis on individual rationality and a lack of focus on power dynamics external and internal to commons sites. Further research should therefore focus on how governance can accommodate dissensus and account for conflict, while still utilising the benefits of collaborative working and commons governance.

This would require research into how to move away from the platform economy of publishing, which seems to be the current direction of travel for scholarly communication. Publishing is becoming increasingly 'platformised' through commercial services such as academia.edu, ResearchGate and the walled gardens of Elsevier and SpringerNature that seek to control the entire research lifecycle from pre-submission to post-publication. These for-profit companies seek to profit from the interactions on their platforms, rather than just the paid-for services they offer, and they are thus designed to encourage subjectivities and behaviours, especially those based on the individual, liberal calculating and competitive subject. An alternative form of governance for platforms is based on the work of the so-called platform cooperative movement (Scholz 2016), through which service users get to decide democratically how a platform operates, rather than shareholders. But like the for-profit platforms they seek to oppose, platform

cooperatives have the potential to homogenise user interactions through their large, indiscriminate web infrastructures. An important aspect of this is size: to what extent do web-based platforms *necessarily* entail homogenised, care-less user interactions or can cooperative forms of governance promote difference and heterogeneity?

Similarly, how is it possible to introduce governance between individual commons sites who already have their own individual governance structures? More work is needed on how assembly organisation can work across commons, while still accounting for local practices and governance of individual commons projects. How, for example, can the Radical Open Access Collective formalise relationships between members but still preserve their individual autonomy? This research would look to the histories and operations of various radical and commons movements to understand how they work together in the service of a loosely defined horizon. It would also look to understand how the common resource itself informs the kinds of relationships and identities that governance would need to account for: an ecological commons is likely to promote a different series of subjectivities to a digital commons, for example, through different interactions with physical space and rivalrous resources.

Finally, looking towards scholarly communication as mediated by the university itself: what are the possibilities of researchers regaining control of the infrastructures and platforms used for publishing and its related services, such as commercial repositories, article databases, social media and data archives? These infrastructures are increasingly outsourced to commercial services who benefit not just from university subscription payments but also from controlling and monetising the interaction data generated by the services their platforms. What role does the university press have to play here in retaining this data? Is it possible or desirable to bring all infrastructures for scholarly communication back into the university itself and/or under governance of the research community? These are questions that require practical responses from a variety of perspectives and go to the heart of the university's role in the future of scholarly communications.

Commoning the university

Although this research was conducted during a time of great change for publication practices in the humanities, it is striking how much effort has gone into

encouraging an understanding of OA that preserves the current value system of the marketised university and the cultures it promotes. Universities are increasingly organised as businesses with students as consumers taught by a precarious class of temporary lecturers who each compete for a shrinking number of permanent academic positions with ever worsening conditions. This culture is both unaffected by the current move to OA (as illustrated in this thesis) and actively works against the possibility of a greater shift towards commons-based forms of publishing by requiring academics to continue to pursue individual gain in the commercial publishing industry. Furthermore, universities contribute to this culture by continuing to outsource the infrastructures for scholarly communication to companies seeking to create end-to-end ecosystems of publishing that lock universities into their services and force them to relinquish control of their transactional data.

One response to this culture from advocates is to argue that OA needs to conform to the incentive structures imposed by universities, i.e., practicing OA should not prevent a researcher from submitting to their journal of choice. This argument has led to the kinds of OA promoted by the HEFCE and RCUK policies, the conditions for which being largely dictated by commercial publishers rather than the academic community itself. Another response by OA advocates is to argue that universities should change their criteria for career progression (and tenure in the US) to *encourage* open access practices (e.g., Wical and Kocken 2017). But this too is a mistake because it treats OA as an end goal, or a goal based on individual career progression in the neoliberal university, rather than a key component in a broader cultural struggle for the collective good. A better way to think of OA, then, is as a part of a reassessment of higher education with respect to the kinds of commons forms of organisation, governance and praxis explored in the previous chapter. This is to say that OA as a commons cannot be divorced from other commons-based experiments in higher education within and outside the university – it both requires and can help instigate cultural change towards the commons.

A number of research questions arise from a broader reassessment of higher education with respect to the commons. Firstly, what currently prevents commons-based forms of organisation in the university? This requires an understanding of the cultures of organisation in higher education and the subjectivities that they create and perpetuate and how this works against both a praxis of commoning and

commons governance itself. Much has been written on academic subjectivities in the neoliberal university in the field of critical university studies, though less on what actually prevents researchers from exploring alternatives to current forms of governance in both the public and private university. This will also require an assessment of forms of ‘disruption’ undertaken in the name of higher education (such as ‘blockchain’ universities, MOOCS, etc.) to understand the needs these primarily for-profit alternatives are responding to and why they are successful or not.

Secondly, what are the commons-based alternatives currently being explored for higher education and what are their motivations and values? This would assess experiments in alternative ways of higher education provision, from collectively-organised, public-facing projects to spontaneous or ephemeral forms of organisation, such as teach-outs and university occupations. Also of interest are the more formalised cooperative universities such as Mondragon University and the Cooperative College, alongside examples of commoning within the traditional university space, often based on free culture, that work against higher education as a competitive activity and in favour of a broader emancipatory common good. What are the motivations for participants, how are the projects governed and how do they operate in a practical sense? How also are humanities disciplines conceived here: do alternative providers of higher education follow a similar understanding of the humanities and traditional university qualifications (and if so why)? This would be a similar project to that undertaken here in the analysis of scholar-led publishers who represent alternatives to the status quo.

Finally, with an understanding of the motivations and values of alternatives for higher education, the final question would explore how these projects can be encouraged and whether they can be joined up with other commons-based projects related to transforming education towards a commons horizon. How can communities regain control and govern university infrastructures (physical and digital), intellectual property (such as transactional data and learning analytics) and extend their knowledge work outwards to a range of publics? This would be one way of understanding the possibilities of boundary commoning between the various collectively-organised projects in higher education, not just in publishing but in teaching and research too. This question also presupposes that, despite the need to think of the commons as a series of struggles rather than a grand project to roll out, these struggles will be actively supported by commoning in a range of sites,

particularly those that impact on each other and prevent new cultures being explored (as the university does on publishing). How, then, is it possible to avoid systematised and platform-based thinking while maintaining an appreciation of the commons in a holistic sense, not just connected to publishing (as explored here) but as a relational way of organising?

Concluding remarks

Throughout this thesis I have argued for the power of scholar-led collectives of presses to reorient publishing towards more experimental, critical, care-full, and ethical practices for OA in the humanities. Recalling the Audre Lorde epitaph at start of this thesis, it is through the ‘community’ that this reorientation is possible: collective efforts facilitate new ways of working beyond those imposed by and reflective of mere individualism. But as Lorde also shows us, our common struggle should not mean the ‘shedding of our differences’ or the denial that these differences exist, but the continual re-articulation of different ways of existing together that take these differences into account. The care-full commons should therefore be a collective effort for reimagining publishing practices, and those of the humanities more generally, as acts of care and generosity within and outside the university. Through conceiving publishing in this way, we can begin to understand the truly radical potential of open access for the futures of the humanities.

Afterword

Since this thesis was drafted and examined, the ‘ScholarLed’ consortium of OA presses was launched with six founding members (Mattering Press, MayFly Books, meson press, Open Book Publishers, Open Humanities Press, and punctum books,). Coincidentally, and though I played no role in the founding of the consortium, many of the ideas described in Chapter 6 (in the section ‘Imagining the Care-full Commons’) are present within the design of ScholarLed. Focusing on open access book publishing, the consortium aims to explore the potential of collaborative approaches to infrastructure for open access:

Members of the consortium each retain their distinct identity as publishers, with different audiences, processes, business models and stances towards Open Access. What they share, however, is a commitment to opening up scholarly research to diverse readerships, to resisting the marketization of academic knowledge production, and to working collaboratively rather than in competition (ScholarLed 2018).

In effect, the ScholarLed consortium represents a boundary commons whereby individual presses maintain their identity while sharing resources between one another to utilise the benefits of collaboration and economies of scale. Although the consortium is only nascent, it represents the possibilities of a different approach to open access that is researcher-led and collaborative, rather than grounded in market practices of competition. I would hope that ScholarLed is the start of a collaborative approach to OA, not just between researcher-led presses, but between library publishers, university presses and other publishing collectives too. It therefore resonates strongly with much of my thinking behind the ‘care-full commons’ and I am excited to see ScholarLed develop.

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